the weekly Standard

MARCH 29, 2004

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THAT OLD TIME RELIGION
MATT LABASH

A Separate Peace?

The War on Terror After Madrid

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL • CHARLES FAIRBANKS
REUEL MARC GERECHT • WILLIAM KRISTOL
VICTORINO MATUS • PABLO PARDO • IRWIN M. STELZER

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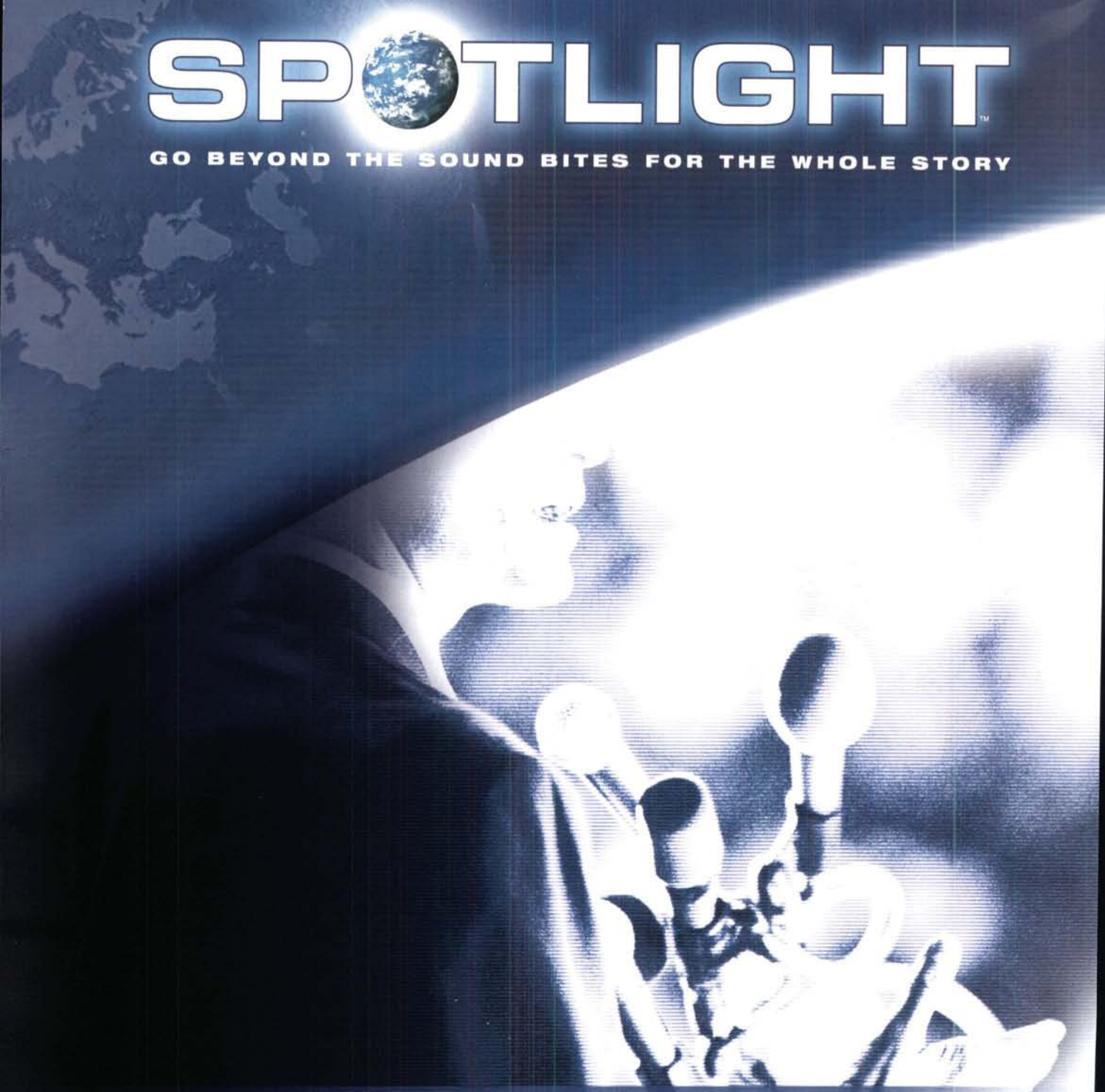

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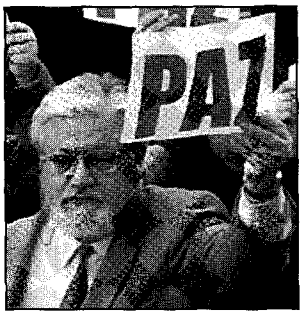

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, the second week in July, the second week in August, and the second week in September) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Nicholas H.B. Swezey 1-202-496-3355. Midwest Advertising Sales: 1-312-953-7236. Copyright 2004, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

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Mr. Multilateral

Much has been made in recent days of John Kerry's boasting about support for his candidacy from undisclosed foreign leaders. After former Malaysian prime minister and noted eugenics theorist Mahathir Mohamad offered his backing on the record, the Kerry campaign moved quickly to put an end to the endorsement talk. "It is simply not appropriate for any foreign leader to endorse a candidate in America's presidential election," said Kerry foreign policy adviser Rand Beers. "John Kerry does not seek, and will not accept, any such endorsements."

The whole flap was good for a few laughs—something THE SCRAPBOOK predicts will be in short supply in this campaign.

But the controversy also obscured a more serious problem with Kerry's attempt to position himself as Mr. Multilateral. In his eagerness to please our would-be foreign friends, he insults the allies we have. This basic truth was among the points Vice President Dick Cheney made in an excellent speech last week.

> Senator Kerry speaks often about the need for international cooperation, and has vowed to usher in a "golden age of American diplomacy." He is fond of mentioning that some countries did not support America's actions in Iraq. Yet of the many nations that have joined our coalition—allies and friends of the United States—Senator Kerry speaks with open contempt. Great Britain, Australia, Italy, Spain, Poland, and more than 20 other nations have contributed and sacrificed for the freedom of the Iraqi people. Senator Kerry calls these countries "window dressing." They are, in his words, "a coalition of the coerced and the bribed."

Many questions come to mind, but the first is this: How would Senator Kerry describe Great Britain—coerced, or bribed? Or Italy—which recently lost 19 citizens, killed by terrorists in Najaf. Was Italy's contribution just window dressing? If such dismissive terms are the vernacular of the golden age of diplomacy Senator Kerry promises, we are left to wonder which nations would care to join any future coalition. He speaks as if only those who openly oppose America's objectives have a chance of earning his respect. Senator Kerry's characterization of our good allies is ungrateful to nations that have withstood danger, hardship, and insult for standing with America in the cause of freedom.

As for THE SCRAPBOOK, we'll take John Howard or Tony Blair over Mahathir Mohamad any day. ♦

Happy Birthday, C-SPAN

Twenty-five years ago, on March 19, 1979, C-SPAN began its live broadcasts from the floor of the House of Representatives. There were fears that the sozzled, dyspeptic solons then populating the House would as a result be supplanted by blow-dried, stuffed-shirt camera hogs. And—well—those fears proved prophetic.

But, on balance, there is a lot to celebrate in the C-SPAN culture. David Brooks put it well in these pages five years ago:

"When you step back far enough you begin to appreciate that C-SPAN is so far out of tune with the times that it has become an intellectual counterculture. Especially on the weekends, the people who fill its screens seem quaintly and bravely out of step: the historian who has devoted her career to researching Pickett's Charge, the auctioneer who specializes in rare 18th-century books, the biographer who has spent years describing John Adams.

"C-SPAN is factual in a world grown theoretical. It is slow in a world growing more hyper. It is word-oriented in an era that is visually sophisticated. With its open phone lines, it is genuinely populist in a culture that preaches populism more than it practices it. And occupying its unique niche—C-SPAN is funded by the cable industry to cover Congress and public events—it has managed to perform feats of civic education that are unmatched by better-funded institutions, such as the History Channel, PBS, the Smithsonian, or the multibillion-dollar foundations." ♦

How to Stage a Controversy (cont.)

A woman named Sue Niederer is fast becoming one of the most quoted critics of the war in Iraq. Niederer is from Pennington, New Jersey. Last February, her 24-year-old son, U.S. Army Lt. Seth Dvorin, was killed in Iskandariyah, a city outside of Baghdad. Before he died, caught in the blast from a roadside bomb, Lt. Dvorin saved the lives of 18 soldiers in his platoon. Over 400 people showed up for his funeral in New Jersey.

His mother believes Dvorin died a pointless death. "It's not a declared war so what did my son die for?" Niederer told the New Jersey *Home News Tribune*. Two weeks after burying her son, she took her message to Princeton,

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where she was one of several protesters outside a lecture hall in which Colin Powell was delivering a speech. A little over three weeks after that, she joined a protest outside the Dover Air Force base in Dover, Delaware, which grimly doubles as our largest military mortuary. The protesters, she told AP, are "telling the truth about what's going on."

By contrast, she explained to ABC News that day, the U.S. government in general—and the military in particular—is deceiving the public: "They don't want you to see the body. They don't want you to see anything." The next day, March 15, she traveled to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, where she told the *Toronto Star*: "Anyone who has been killed over there has died in vain."

Last Wednesday, March 17, Niederer showed up at the Capitol, where she again took part in an antiwar protest, this time as members of the House of Representatives were debating a resolution in support of Coalition troops as well as the Iraqis, who signed a provisional constitution on March 8. (The resolution passed 327-93.) Niederer made it into the Associated Press's account, headlined, "House Iraq Resolution Turns into Partisan Debate":

> Outside the Capitol, opponents of the Iraqi operation, including military families, rallied against administration policies. "Our message to Congress today is clear: spare us the platitudes, the pious rhetoric, the empty slogans. Give us the truth," said Sue Niederer, of Pennington, NJ, whose 24-year-old son, Dvorin, was killed in Iraq in February.

A truth that the Associated Press did not see fit to mention is that Niederer was at the Capitol as a member of Military Families Speak Out, a group of relatives of U.S. soldiers who advocate the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Military Families Speak Out, in turn, had come to the Capitol at the behest of Win Without War, a coalition of leftist antiwar groups, to advocate that Congress censure President Bush.

The AP account not only omitted Niederer's political affiliation, which was made clear in the press release put out by Win Without War and *MoveOn.org*. It also left out the second half of her quote, which spells out the Win Without War agenda: "Our message to Congress today is clear," she says in the press release. "Spare us the platitudes, the pious rhetoric, the empty slogans. Give us the truth. Do your job and hold those accountable who have denied us the truth. Censure President Bush for the deceptions and manipulations that led our nation to war."

Matthew Continetti detailed in last week's issue ("How to Stage a Controversy") the press's increasing penchant for relying on left-wing public relations hounds when writing anti-Bush stories —without identifying their sources' affiliations. Sanitizing the quotations they lift from press releases may be a new low. ♦

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Casual

Murphy's Law

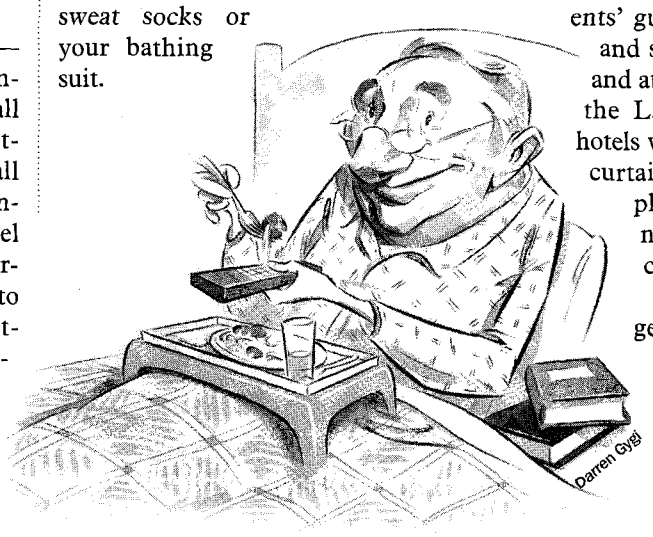
I haven't slept in my own bed for more than a month now. For two weeks, I spent all my nights in hotel rooms as I traveled the country hawking my new book. The rest of the time my wife and I have been residents of the guest room in my parents' home, because we are making a slow and laborious transition from our old apartment in Brooklyn Heights to our new apartment in Manhattan.

We have squeezed ourselves—overweight me and my trim seven-months-pregnant wife—onto a small Murphy bed that could be the setting for a pretty hilarious screwball comedy scene. My parents are wonderful hosts who have made us feel entirely at home. But alas, their narrow bed leaves more than a little to be desired in the comfort department. Indeed, I am sure my patriotic parents would not object to my inviting our American interrogators to spend a night on their Murphy bed so that our nation's military could acquaint itself with an innovative way of compelling Saddam Hussein to give up all his secrets.

Our own mattress, wrapped in plastic to protect it from lead-paint dust from walls that had not been scraped down for 75 years, awaits our arrival somewhere inside a rabbit-warren of boxes and upside-down furniture at our new place. I miss our regular mattress, of course, but I have to confess I miss the hotel beds that I slept in for two weeks even more.

Hotels are not, for the most part, my cup of tea. Some of the most depressing days and nights of my life have been spent in hotel rooms. They can be among the weirdest places on earth. You arrive, you check in, you tip somebody several dollars for simply doing his job rolling a cart down a hallway, he closes the door behind him and you are—nowhere.

You are rootless, placeless, connection-less. You can't find a comfortable place to sit—the chairs don't really seem made for that purpose—so you lie down on the bed in the middle of the day. (Which is never a good idea for one's spirits.) You could go to the fitness center or the pool, but inevitably you've forgotten your sweat socks or your bathing suit.



So you turn on the television, which takes you instantly to coming attractions for the movies available on the hotel's closed-circuit channel. So you watch them, over and over, progressively hypnotized, wondering if you should take a chance on *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Then you see it costs $11.99 plus tax to take that chance, and you disgustedly refuse.

You're hungry, so you call room service; but they tell you they are backed up and it will take an hour for your order to arrive. And even though you've asked for a salad and a Diet Coke, it will still cost the same $33.72 it would have if you had ordered a steak, crème brûlée, and coffee. So you say no, and then—what? Then nothing.

The privacy may seem nirvana-like to some people, but to me it's more like purgatory. At least it was until this past trip, when my feelings about hotel rooms changed. All I really noticed was how amazingly comfortable and large the beds were by comparison with my parents' Murphy bed.

In hotels from Houston to Dallas, Los Angeles to Atlanta, the pillows were soft and plentiful, the mattresses thickly padded, the sheets crisp. My parents' guest room overlooks the astonishingly noisy Lexington Avenue—down which trucks happily bounce along at 3 o'clock in the morning as though they were gymnasts on trampolines. But these hotel rooms were profoundly quiet. My parents' guest room has a bright and sunny eastern exposure, and at 6:30 A.M. it's lit up like the Las Vegas Strip. In the hotels where I stayed, blackout curtains kept my room plunged in blessed darkness until the wake-up call.

Indeed, because my generous publisher was picking up the tab, even for room service, somehow that $33.72 charge seemed far less onerous than it might have otherwise. So it was a joy and a pleasure to spend so many days in the very places where I have found myself so frequently depressed.

The best of all was the hotel in Los Angeles. It was ritzy and fashionable, and a bunch of celebrities were staying there because it was Oscar weekend. But mostly what made it my favorite was the presence of another person in my room.

That was my wife, who met me in Los Angeles to spend one of our last peaceful weekends away before the birth of our first child in June. And the best thing of all was that we were able to spend a few nights together without either one of us falling off the mattress onto the floor.

John Podhoretz

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Greg St. Etienne
Chief Operating Officer
Liberty Bank and Trust

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Postmodern History

In "The Pomo Primary" (March 15), Andrew Ferguson, alas, missed a watershed "landmark" in politico-journalistic navel-gazing. It came after one of the presidential debates in 1988. When the debate was over, reporters swarmed into the "spin room" and, for some bizarre reason, began interviewing *each other* on camera.

Then, the *coup de grâce*: The control room switched to a different camera, an overhead wide shot, and viewers were treated to the media filming the media filming the media interviewing the media. I remember thinking, "This is not good." It certainly has not gotten any better since.

David C. Idema
Staatsburg, NY

Urbane Society

Harry Siegel's well-written and otherwise fair-minded review of my recent book, *City: Urbanism and its End* (March 15), ends with a reference to "Douglas Rae's grand utopian vision of the city as a monolithic social (and housing) 'project'"—this in contrast with Mayor Giuliani's "relatively prosaic goal of safe and civil streets."

This is incorrect. I write about the tragic impact of public housing projects. I entertain no utopian vision for urban America, and insist on the view that cities work best when the nongovernmental forces of business and personal civility are at play, while grand plans formulated by government elites are not. Half of *City* is devoted to the success of informal governance, the other to the failure of social engineering carried forward by governmental elites.

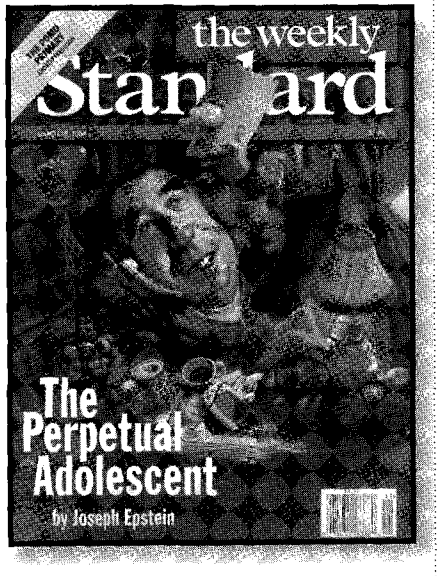
Douglas W. Rae
Yale University
New Haven, CT

Change Agents

Reuel Marc Gerecht's "Going Soft on Iran" is spot-on when he questions the approach promoted by the so-called foreign policy realists (March 8). Indeed, for the past quarter century, the fig-leaf policy of successive U.S. administrations has turned out to be a miserable failure, serving only to prolong the suffering of the Iranian people and undermining America's pro-democracy pronouncements and its war on terror.

But Gerecht's article leaves much to be desired when it comes to offering a concrete road map to democracy in Iran. True, Iran's nuclear and terrorist programs will only cease when democracy flourishes in Iran, but how does one achieve a "regime change," if that's what Gerecht is proposing?

The fact is that unless the United States shows the courage to rectify Bill Clinton's error in 1997 of blacklisting, as a goodwill gesture to Mohammad Khatami, the Iranian Mujahedeen



Khalq, its Iran policy will remain in neutral.

Whether pundits in Washington like it or not, the Mujahedeen Khalq is the element of change in Iran by virtue of its democratic, anti-fundamentalist Islamic ideology.

Ali Safavi
Near East Policy Research
Alexandria, VA

Passion Play

Certainly there is more credence to the anti-Semitism charge against Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* than Matt Labash acknowledges in "Passion and Popcorn" (March 8). The issue can't be neutralized just by pointing out that Gibson "infused his film with secondary sympathetic Jewish portraits," as Labash writes. A few good Germans in *Schindler's List* didn't mean that *all* the Germans who were in that movie were pleasant. It is frustrating that so many reliably adversarial commentators like Labash seem to be turning a blind eye to the anti-Semitic context within which Mel Gibson's movie was made.

Gibson's father denies the Holocaust. Gibson himself won't take a clear, unequivocal position on the matter. Gibson belongs to a schismatic branch of Catholicism that rejects Vatican II, the church council in which the Jews were absolved of guilt in Jesus' crucifixion.

Gibson finds inspiration for the movie from Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich, a late-18th-century visionary nun who, in her visions, saw Jews with "hooked noses" and referred to Jews strangling Christian children to use their blood in rituals.

A refusal to face the issue of Gibson's flirtation with anti-Semitism seems rampant throughout the conservative media. Consider the line: "His blood be upon us and our children," which the Jews proclaim to Pilate in the Gospel of Matthew.

Under pressure, Gibson removed the subtitled translation of the line from his movie. He could have removed the spoken line entirely, but he didn't. He chose not to. Why? I wonder. Remember that Gibson didn't want subtitles in his movie *in the first place*. So it is unlikely that he feels he has altered his message.

What's interesting is that when I talk with Christians who I know would be offended at anti-Semitism and who have seen *The Passion of the Christ*, they tell me sincerely that it was not anti-Semitic. Which is, I believe, to the credit of the teachings of modern American churches.

They have done such a good job at eliminating anti-Semitism in modern American religious discourse that traditional anti-Semitic themes no longer strike a chord among followers.

Noam Dworman
New York, NY

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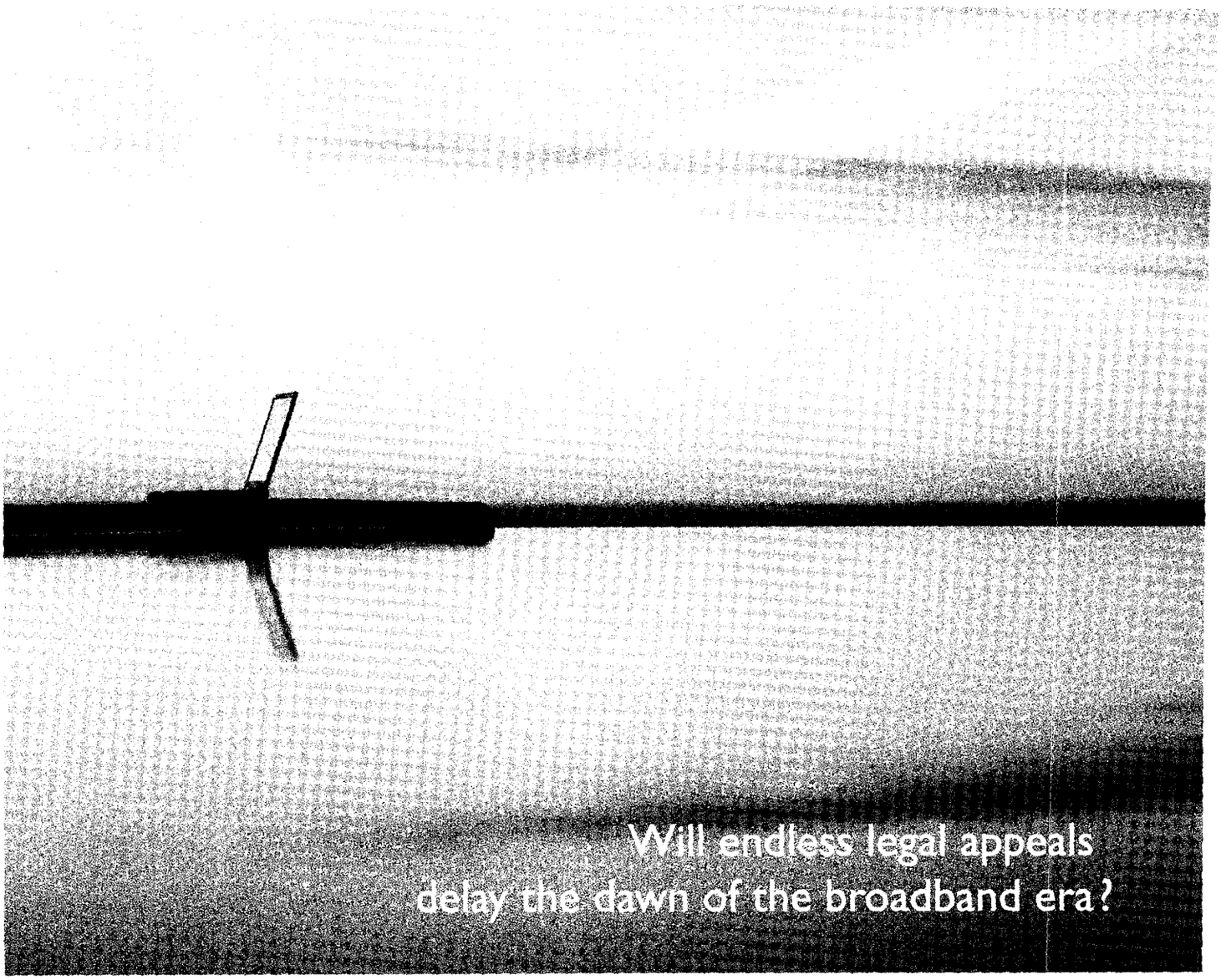

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the weekly Standard

The Crisis in Europe

Let's begin with the obvious: Whatever the motives of Spanish voters, however much the Aznar government mishandled the aftermath of the attack—last Sunday's Spanish election was a victory for terror. Some say that the election result was an expression of democracy. That's true. It was an expression of a popular willingness to retreat in the face of terror. The terrorists struck three days before the election, seeking to defeat Prime Minister Aznar's party, and they succeeded.

The Spanish election was also a defeat for the United States. A European leader who, under great pressure, stood with us, was repudiated. Other world leaders have shown signs, predictably, of going wobbly.

Since Spain voted, President Bush has restated our determination to see the war on terror through to victory. This is, obviously, the right message to send the terrorists. But what about our European allies? Has there been energetic American diplomacy to shore up our friends and to mitigate the damage that has been done? Have there been efforts to change public opinion in various European countries, both in those whose governments are with us on Iraq and those that aren't?

The Bush administration shows little sense of urgency in making our case in Europe. The most unfriendly European voices—those of Spain's newly victorious José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, of European Commission president Romano Prodi, of French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin—haven't hesitated to draw their own conclusions. Their conclusions will become authoritative if they remain uncontroverted.

Zapatero, for example, claims the "occupation" of Iraq is a "fiasco," and says he looks forward to a "profound debate" with the Bush administration on how to fight terrorism: "Fighting terrorism with bombs, with Tomahawk missiles, isn't the way to beat terrorism, but the way to generate more radicalism." Furthermore, Zapatero tells Bush (and Blair), "You can't organize a war with lies." Meanwhile, Prodi suggests "the American approach" to the war on terror, depending in part on the use of force and on regime change, has been discredited. Indeed, Prodi suggests the war in Iraq was motivated by "vengeance," making Americans somehow "prisoners of terror and of terrorists." And de Villepin argues that the world has become "more dangerous and unstable" because of the foolish war in Iraq. "Terrorism didn't exist in Iraq before. Today, it is one of the world's principal sources of world terrorism."

Messrs. Zapatero, Prodi, and de Villepin are wrong. It is not hard to show, in some detail and with arguments that might convince those with a willingness to listen, that they are wrong. Would that more of their fellow Europeans were rising to the occasion. Instead, thankless as the task may look to the White House, it is the duty of the Bush administration to make those arguments with renewed urgency, and make them directly to the Europeans.

This week marked the first anniversary of the war in Iraq. President Bush's remarks included eloquent restatements of the justice of the war, assertions of progress made over the last year, and a reiteration of our commitment to see Iraq through to peaceful self-rule. THE WEEKLY STANDARD agrees with virtually every word in those speeches. But they are not sufficient. If the administration were to put half the effort into sustained arguments aimed at citizens of fellow democracies that it puts into its (rather effective and perfectly legitimate) deconstruction of the foreign policy positions of John Kerry, we might have a chance of turning the tide in Europe.

We can decry the decision of the Spanish people all we want, but lamenting a defeat is one thing. Acting to minimize its damage is another. It's time for the American government to get serious about dealing with the political crisis in Europe. There is a big difference between an isolated al Qaeda victory, however unfortunate, and a chain reaction of political capitulations that invite more terror.

—*William Kristol*

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Holy War in Europe

Is al Qaeda a Eurocentric organization?

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

On August 26, 1995, a militant Islamic group led by a 24-year-old French Muslim named Khaled Kelkal attempted to blow one of France's high-speed trains off its rails. Luckily, the bomb's detonator, which used an ordinary 12-volt battery, failed. Later that fall, other bombs would go off in France: two in double-decked metro rail cars in suburban Paris, one in a trash can along the very bourgeois Avenue de Friedland, another in a Parisian open-air market, and one more in a provincial Jewish school. In all there were nine attacks in three months, which killed 10 people and wounded 114.

The bombings in 1995 provoked a widespread awareness for the first time in France that the country had a radical-Muslim problem, which was increasingly homegrown and not imported. Kelkal moved to France from Algeria when he was one month old; not known for being religious in his troubled youth, he became an Islamic militant in a French jail, as have hundreds of highly Westernized French Muslims. Many more thoroughly secularized French Muslims, who did not have crime-filled youths, have become Islamic radicals, culturally at war with the society that made them. Zacarias Moussaoui, the "twentieth hijacker" of 9/11, is the most notorious example of an areligious Frenchman who became intoxicated with the holy-war ideology preached in many radical mosques throughout Western Europe.

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This pattern of highly Westernized Muslims and converted Christians becoming radicalized believers has appeared throughout Western Europe. Relatively few Turks have joined radical Islamic organizations allied with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, even though Turkish fundamentalists are numerous and often hardcore. At home and abroad, they are perhaps more numerous and better organized than are fundamentalists of any other nationality. But the Turks who have been arrested for association with al Qaeda usually share one bond: They were either born or raised in Germany and are culturally more German than they are Turkish Muslim. These young men are part of what the Iranian-French scholar Farhad Khosrokhavar has called the *néo-umma guerrière*—"the new holy-war community of believers" that recognizes neither national nor ethnic identity nor traditional Islamic values. Their Islam is "a new type of Nietzscheanism" where suicide and murder become sacred acts of an elite, self-made race of believers who want to bring on a purifying Apocalypse.

A small cadre of European scholars, mirrored by a small group of European internal-security and intelligence officials, have followed the growth of Islamic radicalism in Europe for nearly 20 years. They know, even if European politicians do not, that Europe's most fearsome Muslim true believers are not products of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, or the First Gulf War, or the American troop presence in Saudi Arabia after 1990, or the Algerian civil war, or the Bosnian war, or the strife in Chechnya, or the Hindu pillaging of mosques, or the war in Afghanistan, or the second American war against Saddam Hussein, or the globalization of American culture. These events are banners that men who are already converted to jihad wave as they march to give battle. The holy warriors in Europe do not want to see peace in Palestine any more than Hamas's spiritual chief Ahmad Yassin or Osama bin Laden or Iran's clerical guide Ali Khamenei wants to see Israelis and Palestinians solve their problems in two separate, peacefully coexisting states. They do not care about Israeli settlements.

Europe's jihadists are born from their imperfect assimilation into Western European societies, from the particular alienation that young Muslim males experience in Europe's post-Christian, devoutly secular societies. The phenomenon is vastly more common among Arabs than among African or Asian Muslims. The reasons why these young, predominantly Arab males are drawn to the most militant expressions of Islam are complex and always personal. But their journey—which they usually begin as highly Westernized, modern-educated youths of little Islamic faith and end as practitioners of bin Ladenism—is a thoroughly European experience.

The jihadists of Europe have drunk deeply from the virulently anti-American left-wing currents of Continental thought and mixed it with the Islamic emotions of 1,400 years of competition with the Christian West. It's a Molotov cocktail of the third-world socialist Frantz Fanon and the Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb. Muslims elsewhere have gone through similar conversions—the United States, too, has had its Muslim jihadists and will, no doubt, produce more. And the globalization of this virulent strain of fundamentalist, usually Saudi-financed, Islam is real and probably getting worse. But the modern European experience seems much more likely to produce violent young Muslims than the American. Europe may be

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competitive with the worst breeding grounds in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

For Americans, after 9/11, this is obviously not just of academic interest. For the future of al Qaeda—if al Qaeda is to have a future where killing Americans en masse remains its transcendent raison d'être—is in Western Europe. September 11 could not have happened without a European base of operations.

Though the State Department wasn't particularly discriminating in issuing visas to Saudis before 9/11, it does a much better job now. The security review of visas granted to Middle Eastern men will only become more stringent with time, doing enormous injustice to the innocent and greatly complicating the operational lives of the guilty. Western European travel documents—which still allow easy access to the United States—are essential for al Qaeda and its allied organizations. But obtaining travel-worthy false European passports for non-state-supported terrorist organizations is becoming harder and harder (this is particularly true since the European Union forced the Belgians to implement better control of their passports, which had been "disappearing" routinely in large numbers). Thus, Islamic holy-warrior terrorist organizations need European Muslims who can lawfully obtain Western European passports.

Al Qaeda knew this a long time ago, which is why the recruitment of Muslims who could travel and operate in the West was a high priority. If al Qaeda or allied holy-warrior organizations cannot operationally enlist and train American Muslims to strike within the United States—and the evidence before and after 9/11 suggests that al Qaeda has done a poor job of finding American Muslims who need to kill non-Muslim Americans to express their love of God—then they must enlist European Muslims or risk compromising the most important element in their recruitment call to holy war. French-born holy warriors could perhaps spiritually survive bombing France, but it's not the same as attacking the United States. America is the cutting edge of Western civilization—not France—and modern Muslim holy warriors want ideally to terrify and humble their enemy's advance guard, not the more lightly armed, less threatening troops behind.

Which brings us to Spain. It is possible that if the Spanish were to withdraw from Iraq, they might save themselves from further jihadist attack. It has been a long time since Spain was the preeminent Christian foe of the Muslim world. Unlike France, which is still a cultural force in North Africa (even if, increasingly, it is only a French translation service for American civilization), Spain is irrelevant to the dreams, aspirations, and hatreds of Arabs. France has a Muslim population now deeply and permanently anchored in its national psyche and daily life. Spain does not. And as much as some Muslim denizens of Spain may hate their non-Muslim neighbors, it is a little hard to envision even the most historically sensitive Spanish Muslim holy warrior bombing Madrid *repeatedly* because of the medieval loss of "Andalusia" to the Catholic princes of Castille and counts of Barcelona. Spain could probably walk away from the United States, pillory America as loudly as possible (anti-Americanism in Spain runs deep and is historically much more heartfelt than in France), emphasize the glories of Muslim Spain and sincerely regret its fall, *and* not get bombed anymore.

The bombings in Spain could easily produce a Europe-wide temptation to duck: While quietly assisting America in its counterterrorist efforts (the French have been superb allies in this regard since 9/11), they publicly would take as much distance as possible from the United States and ratchet up the "pro-Muslim," "pro-Arab" propaganda. This approach would naturally blend into Western Europe's current official analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation as the crux of all the bad blood between the Muslim world and the West. It could dovetail nicely with the developing Democratic party campaign argument depicting Iraq as a mistake, as a digression from the war on terror that has made counterterrorism more difficult. Muslim holy warriors might still try to bomb American embassies or businesses in Europe, which of course could cause numerous European victims, but that would be better than having European passenger trains blown off their rails or Alpine highway tunnels firebombed.

President Bush has said that we, the West, are all in this together. But this simply isn't true. The *néo-umma guerrière* doesn't really want to strike Spain, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Germany, Poland, or even France as much as it wants to bomb the United States. It would be a delicious irony if small bands of Muslim holy warriors in the twenty-first century accomplished the opposite of what the Ottomans, the most powerful of Islam's empires, achieved in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The latter helped bring the West together; the former may help tear it apart.

If a Western split doesn't happen, then we will probably have the French to thank. They know that Zacarias Moussaoui was once upon a time a good Frenchman. They know that more Khaled Kelkals are being born in the banlieues. They know that even the most dedicated Muslim holy warriors might sometimes have to settle for attacking the second best. But then again, Paris hated losing on Iraq. Many in the French elite—most prominently, the foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin—want the democratic experiment in Iraq to fail. With the American loss of Spain and the waffling in Poland, the French sense victory in Europe. It will be interesting to see whether France's envy of American hegemony trumps its own experience and fear of Muslim holy warriors trying to blow their way into heaven. ♦

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We Hold These Ambiguities . . .

Truth, lies, and intelligence.

BY CHARLES FAIRBANKS

"YOU CAN'T ORGANIZE a war with lies." With these words, and a condescending smirk, the victorious leader of Spain's Socialists, José Luiz Rodríguez Zapatero, summarized the meaning of his victory over America's brave ally José María Aznar. "Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush must do some reflection and self-criticism," he said, reverting to old Communist jargon. After the appalling attack on commuters in Madrid, which triggered so many powerful and inchoate feelings, questions of truth and falsehood took surprising precedence. Demonstrators outside the headquarters of Aznar's party the Saturday after the bombing shouted demands for "the truth" and carried signs with the single word "liars." Now Aznar's government, still in power during the transition, is desperately declassifying documents, vowing to lay bare "the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

The cry of "liars" was surely evoked by the Aznar government's initial, and probably honest, attribution of the bombing to the Basque independence group ETA. (Enemies at home usually seem closer than enemies abroad.) But Zapatero had already structured his campaign around this slogan: "My first principle: Thou shalt not kill. My second principle: Thou shalt not lie." In the United States, misrepresentation of intelligence assessments is the Democrats' main accusation against President Bush.

Is politics, then, primarily a matter of what is true and what is false? To say that baldly seems somehow odd: Truth and falsehood are more central to science, to scholarship, perhaps to personal ethics. We expect a politician to use rhetoric, to put forward his best case. No more would he floodlight everything embarrassing than a woman would wear her ugliest dress to church. In foreign policy, we hold "frank discussions" with the French, not acrid exchanges that only underline our mutual hostility. Government is not a true and false test, yet current debate is trying to make it one.

Indeed, an insistence on truth in politics is endemic to democracies. In modern representative democracies, intelligence is assessed, and policy generated, somewhere in a vast labyrinth of overlapping, competing, and generally anonymous bureaucracies. Those bureaucracies are only in principle chosen by the few high officials who are, again in principle, chosen by a president that we, or the majority, actually voted for—back before many of today's problems had emerged. For the citizen, it is very frustrating to try to identify and reward the makers of good policy in government, or to know how to enforce his wishes. Perhaps it is this gnawing awareness of how tenuous are the links between citizen and policymaker that whets our hunger to hold accountable the few high officials whose names and responsibilities we actually know. And perhaps, as well, we strictly scrutinize the veracity of our officials in order to live at ease in our democracy; vigilance against lying officials can be an excuse for not finding out about urgent matters ourselves.

The Bush administration, like Aznar's government, has no clue how to respond to the partisan charges of misrepresenting intelligence and policy in the war on terrorism. Whoever shapes public strategy in the White House is passively accepting the framework of debate structured by the president's worst enemies: Intelligence information consists of discrete, hard little facts like coins minted by the gleaming, efficient machine of "the intelligence community." By inserting the appropriate coin in the equally efficient vending machine of policymaking, we make that machine drop the right policy into our hands.

This entire image of government in a republic is a bizarre science-fiction fantasy out of the 1939 New York World's Fair. In fact, we need an intelligence community only because someone doesn't want us to know something. We are trying to find something out because someone is trying to cover it up. *Therefore intelligence information is usually ambiguous and debatable.* Often, the problem is worse: Our intelligence targets conceal things not only by secrecy but by active efforts to make us believe something else. Finally, there is almost always too much information, and of unknown reliability.

Given all these ambiguities, the framework in which one interprets particular signals is inevitably important. That some high policymakers—who had more experience than intelligence analysts and at a far higher level—assessed certain intelligence information in a different framework from some analysts is not reprehensible. It is as easy for intelligence analysts as for investors to make an analysis on the basis of a framework that is wrong. Investors, for example, tend to make decisions on the basis of general confidence or lack of confidence in the market; during the recent tech bubble they were wrong.

The problem of intelligence was presented in a classic way in Roberta Wohlstetter's book *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision.* Every White

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House staffer should read this book. Wohlstetter begins with the numerous indications that, *in retrospect*, pointed to a Japanese surprise attack. The problem was that there were far more indications of a Japanese attack somewhere else or at a different time. As Wohlstetter puts it, the difficulty is in separating "signals" from "noise." These data were then analyzed by bureaucracies that approached them with plausible, but ultimately misleading frameworks: that the Japanese wanted Indonesian oil, and would attack in Southeast Asia, or that their best weapon was sabotage by the Japanese community in Hawaii. Because they are so general, the frameworks of intelligence analysts are no more foolproof than the frameworks of high political appointees. Sadly, they are *all* highly fallible. As citizens, we need to face squarely the vast difficulty of good government.

The Bush administration, however, has replied to accusations of lying to the public by blandly asserting that intelligence information is clear and the "intelligence community" processes it in a perfectly efficient, "professional," undebatable way—like a machine. Thus the Bush White House hangs its survival on the immaculate judgment of the CIA—which has repeatedly been wrong, from the Bay of Pigs through recent estimates of nuclear proliferation.

To appreciate the agonizing situation of Bush administration officials after 9/11, or Aznar administration officials in Spain, we must add the factor that overshadowed everything else: the vast stakes of being wrong. In the ordinary, everyday business of government, officials can shove aside information that is ambiguous, unreliable, or debated. After 9/11, in contrast, President Bush and his officials had to respond to real and appalling danger knowing that "the buck stops here." They had to take responsibility either for acting on the best knowledge they had at that moment—fragmentary and ambiguous as it was—or for *not* acting, allowing whatever threats Iraq posed to grow and strike at a moment of our vulnerability. It is sometimes even necessary to accept an "intelligence estimate" minimizing a certain threat, but to act on the opposite estimate, because the consequences of the worst case outweigh the risks of acting against a threat that is less likely to come about. As Henry Kissinger has observed, if the French Army had used its then-vast preponderance to counter Hitler's invasion of the Rhineland, assistant professors would still be arguing whether Hitler had ever posed a real threat. By waiting to find out Hitler's true intentions, we found out "beyond a reasonable doubt." Too late. Wasn't hedging against unlikely but mortal dangers the entire meaning of our expensive posture of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War?

Getty / Bruno Vincent

No mere candidate—no John Kerry or Zapatero—has ever been in the position of facing those grave choices, in the knowledge that whichever course he took would be his responsibility to bear. Therefore the campaign debates on the Iraq war, in Spain as in the United States, have moved into a fairytale world of infallible intelligence services issuing clear intelligence estimates with certain policy consequences. In this make-believe, world the question whether government lies to its citizens conceals a more essential question: Is it saving their skins?

President Bush knew after 9/11 that he had to choose a course of action in ignorance of how it would turn out for the country or for himself, using his best judgment in the face of tremendous uncertainties. He chose the riskier course, in the short run, but the more provident and responsible course. That course has exposed President Bush and his courageous advisers to numberless misunderstandings, demagogic accusations, and humiliations, which they have borne patiently amid the loneliness of high command. Every American, and every Spaniard too, ought to be grateful for their sense of responsibility.

In a free republic, of course, it is the voter who bears the ultimate responsibility. The citizen must try to understand these uncertain and difficult issues as best he can and choose leaders who will execute the right policies. Always, demagogic candidates for leadership will seek to replace the real issues with that weary ritual, the drama of the powerful and guilty deceiving eternally the simple and innocent. Beneath this endless clamor, the fact remains: We face danger, a danger whose complexities are not neatly displayed behind the glass of a vending machine. ♦

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The End of "New Europe"

Nice while it lasted.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

THE ELECTION VICTORY of Spain's antiwar Socialists in the wake of al Qaeda bombings has left American commentators worried. The war on terrorism, it seems, is endangered by what Italy's *Corriere della Sera* calls "the spirit of Munich . . . blowing across Europe." And that spirit appeared to be blowing at gale force on Thursday morning, when Poland's president Aleksander Kwasniewski told a radio station that his country's troops might pull out of Iraq ahead of schedule, in early 2005. That afternoon, he complained about American intelligence failures in Iraq to a group of French journalists. "We were misled with the information on weapons of mass destruction," he said, later adding, "This is the problem of the United States, of Britain, and also of many other nations."

When the story was trumpeted in the international press as evidence that America's antiterrorist coalition was crumbling, Kwasniewski backtracked, professing himself "very disappointed" that incoming Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero would bring Spanish forces back from Iraq. And Kwasniewski's staff sought to defuse the controversy by telling the Warsaw daily *Rzeczpospolita* the next day that Agence France-Presse was to blame. The Polish word that was translated as "misled" or "led into error," staffers insisted, would have been better rendered by "tantalized" or "deceived." Whether or not this is a distinction with a difference, the official Polish Press Agency (PAP) had translated the word exactly as AFP had: "misled." The same story had apparently been fed to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, who said she thought the Poles had been "a bit misinterpreted." A State Department spokesman added, "This isn't something that worries us."

It should be. The problem is not simply that Poles oppose their country's mission in Iraq by 53 percent to 42 percent, according to a mid-March survey taken by the Polish company CBOS. It is not simply that the Spanish troops Zapatero has promised to withdraw serve in the Polish sector, and their departure will cause real logistical difficulties. It is not simply that senators from both parties in the ruling coalition—the Union of Labor and prime minister Leszek Miller's Democratic Left Alliance—held a press conference on Thursday to urge withdrawal, complaining that Poland's leaders, "in the face of firm opposition by France and Germany, sped us into a war for which there is neither social approval nor money."

The big problem is that, in terms of European Union politics, Poland's interests and Spain's are more tightly linked than the interests of any other pair of member countries. These two are the E.U.'s Siamese twins. As one goes, the other very well may follow.

Poland's and Spain's fates were joined by accident at the E.U.'s Nice summit in December 2000, when German chancellor Gerhard Schröder sought to increase his country's representation on the E.U. Council of Ministers. Until Nice, the "big four" countries (France, Germany, Britain, Italy) had all had the same weight in votes, since they had virtually identical populations—60 million, give or take. With the addition of the East German lands, however, Germany was now a third larger than the others.

France could not countenance being consigned to the second tier in the council of ministers, and Jacques Chirac fought Schröder with all his negotiating might. But that might was limited, because, once France rejected population-based weighting for a bigger country, it could not impose it consistently on the smaller ones. Keeping the balance between France and Germany was achieved by a Faustian bargain. Poland and Spain were enlisted on the side of the status quo with a promise of voting rights just a smidgen less powerful than those of the Big Four. So Europe now had a Big Six.

The big loser from Nice was France, which saw its desire for a strong European central authority hamstrung. The big winner from Nice was Britain, for exactly the same reason. It got the kind of Europe it had always desired—an alliance of disaggregated nation-states, a trading bloc—without having to dirty its hands to fight for it. The Europe that existed on September 11, 2001, had recently become a different kind of Europe than had ever existed before, a British Europe. This was "New Europe"—which was never just an idea but a political regime.

And, because of the Hispano-Polish mistake, it looked like it would go on forever. Europe could not coalesce as an alternative pole to the United States unless it could speak with one voice. But any majority-voting arrangement that would make that possible would be opposed by the "semi-bigs"—Poland and Spain—whose votes (and finances) were imperiled by European unity and self-assertiveness.

The E.U.'s Brussels summit last December, meant to debate former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's draft constitution, failed so spectacularly that many European observers thought the E.U. had reached terminal gridlock. Unifying Europe meant getting rid of the weighted-voting system and replacing it with Giscard's majority-voting one. And Poland and Spain would not let that happen. Ever.

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"The Poles have saved us," was the line in one British paper. But it could just as easily have read "Saved by Spain." The British order in Europe looked unlikely to end because Poland's and Spain's interests looked unlikely to change. And about the most stable element in this mix was the Spanish government. Sixty-one percent of Spaniards told pollsters this winter that unemployment was the most important issue on which they voted. They certainly weren't going to kick out José María Aznar's Popular party, which had entered office in 1996 with unemployment at 22 percent and had cut it in half.

So, just as significant for the anti-terror alliance as Zapatero's reaffirmation of his promise to withdraw Spain's troops was his announcement that Spain would drop its obstruction of the European constitution. Zapatero has decided to trade his country's weight in the council of ministers for a personal position at the ideological prow of European diplomacy. Poland is now all alone in blocking the constitution, and will be exposed to the full political wrath of France and Germany, which it cannot withstand.

It is wrong to assume that European Commission president Romano Prodi was having some kind of nervous breakdown when he took the opportunity, just hours after the Spanish elections, to express his hopes for the European constitution. He saw to the heart of the matter. The Madrid bombings are the E.U.'s Boston Massacre or Alamo—an outright disaster and a bloodbath that is also a founding event. Last Tuesday, Chirac and Schröder met in Paris to discuss fighting the "roots of terrorism." French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin helpfully identified the "two crisis points that nurture terrorism: the Middle East and Iraq." Schröder gave a nod toward transatlantic cooperation. Chirac did not. French and German officials looked forward—"the sooner the better," as Chirac put it—to relaunching work on the European Constitution. And interring, not just as a concept but as a political fact, "New Europe." ♦

The Lonely Man of Europe

Tony Blair loses the Spanish election.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

London

AMONG THE BIG LOSERS in Spain's election was Tony Blair, who lost his most important ally in Europe. With José María Aznar now headed to the world of think tanks and corporate boardrooms, Blair stands almost alone as a European leader willing to expend blood and treasure to establish Iraq as a democratic and peaceful model for a 21st-century Middle East. True, Italy's Silvio Berlusconi remains with Blair, but he lacks Aznar's gravitas and international standing. Blair also expects plucky little Poland—to borrow a title once conferred on Belgium—to stand firm (despite the recent wavering by its prime minister), as will the Danes and, most likely but not certainly, the Dutch. But none of these countries or its leaders carries the weight in Europe's opinion-forming circles that Aznar did.

"You have to look awfully hard to find a silver lining in this cloud," a top official at No. 10 Downing Street told me, as he contemplated the consequences of the Spanish electorate's decision to put in place a government pledged to pull that nation's troops out of Iraq. "This is an unfortunate and horrifying message to send terrorists," he added.

And to send to Blair. Spain's new leader, the Socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, used his post-election speech to call his British counterpart, and the American president, liars—"Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush must do some reflection and self-criticism. . . . You can't organize a war with lies." Bush, accustomed to being called a liar by John Kerry and his party, probably took less offense than Blair, whose annoyance was increased when a top Zapatero lieutenant called him "a complete dickhead." Still, I am told that Blair's congratulatory call was well received. Zapatero promised Spain's continued support for the British prime minister's drive to reform the sclerotic European Union economy—although it is unclear how Zapatero can do this, while at the same time restoring "magnificent relations" with France and Germany (relations with the United States are to be merely "cordial").

The media here, mostly following the BBC's leftish slant, can't help chortling that Labour leader Blair finds himself disappointed at the victory of a left-of-center government in Spain, and rooting for the defeat of a left-of-center candidate in the U.S. elections. The media also managed to use the Madrid tragedy as an excuse for more Bush-bashing. Joan Smith, a columnist with the *Independent*, somehow found in Prime Minister Aznar's reaction to the Madrid bombings—what Europeans are calling 3/11—a contrast with Bush's performance after 9/11. "In a televised address within hours of the murders," she writes, "Aznar was angry but controlled, in marked contrast to the stumbling performance of George Bush after the suicide bombings of 11 September 2001."

While on the subject of useful idiots . . . the chattering class's top

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columnist, Sir Simon Jenkins, managed to provide Blair's team with its only laugh of the week. In a piece prepared earlier but published in the *Spectator* on the day of the Madrid tragedy, Jenkins ridicules the prime minister's fears of a terrorist attack: "Anyone who respects Western civilization would not think it 'in mortal danger' from gangs of Islamic fanatics. . . . Mr. Blair . . . is roaming the world in search of dragons. . . . He craves to be a war leader. But . . . this is no war." So speak Britain's chattering classes while their prime minister wakes up every morning hoping that today is not the day when London will become a New York, or an Istanbul, or a Bali, or a Madrid, but convinced that day will certainly come.

Blair remains under siege by members of his own party because of the failure of search teams to find weapons of mass destruction, and because he is seen by his enemies as Bush's poodle. But once Blair decides something is "the right thing to do," he is unmovable. As he has throughout the post-September 11 period, Blair continues to risk political oblivion by defending the moral necessity of the liberation of Iraq, and the need for preemptive strikes if the West is to prevent its way of life from being destroyed by Islamic terrorists. At his party's conference immediately after the Madrid bombing, he repeated his position: Britain is in "mortal danger" from terrorists intent on destroying our way of life, and they must be defeated. Islamic terrorists are far more dangerous than the IRA's death squads because the Irish terrorists had specific territorial and political demands that could be negotiated, whereas the goal of Islamic fanatics is to force Britain and the West to return to the glory days of Islam. Only surrender will suit them.

Fortunately, Blair is sufficiently eloquent, and the Brits are sufficiently sensible, that at least one poll shows a 49 percent-to-39 percent margin saying that the invasion of Iraq was a good thing to have done. As a top Blair adviser told me, "The British people don't hide."

Tony Blair

EPA Photos / David Cheskin

Downing Street is desperately trying to convince the public that the invasion of Iraq has nothing to do with the Madrid slaughter. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw points out repeatedly that 9/11 preceded the deposing of Saddam, that Turkey was attacked even though its leaders had declined to provide a launching pad for coalition troops, and that Bali's disco-goers were hardly preparing to volunteer for service in Iraq. Other Blair advisers note that terrorists have killed German tourists and sunk a French tanker, and that Air France planes are threatened and often cancelled, even though Gerhard Schröder and Jacques Chirac led the effort to prevent the invasion of Iraq. Islamic terrorists, in short, did not need Iraq as a pretext to kill and maim.

That separation of terrorism from the invasion of Iraq may provide the silver lining that Downing Street finds so difficult to discern in the immediate aftermath of the Madrid attack. Zapatero has consistently contended that the war on terror must be waged, but that Iraq is the wrong venue. This will allow him to withdraw his 1,300 troops on July 1, as promised—unless the U.N. provides him with an acceptable excuse to renege, which, rumor has it, he is desperately hoping will happen—and still claim credentials as a bona fide terrorist fighter. Spain will remain a member of NATO, and will cooperate with other European countries that are now planning greater coordination among themselves of E.U. terror-fighting efforts.

Meanwhile Blair is left to ponder a lonely future, one in which he is almost alone among Europe's major leaders in wishing to stand with the United States in fighting a comprehensive war on terror. As one observer put it, referring to the famous pre-Iraq war photo of Bush, Blair, and Aznar in the Azores, we may be seeing a scenario of one down, two to go. ♦

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The Spanish Disposition

Why the war on terror didn't matter to voters.

BY PABLO PARDO

ARE THE SPANISH COWARDS? Or do they simply not grasp the nature of the war on terror?

The answer to the first question is decidedly "No." Spain has endured 40 years of Basque terrorism, carried out by separatists who follow an ideology almost as weird as al Qaeda's—a mixture of radical leftism and nationalism—yet nobody has ever talked of capitulating to the terrorists and granting independence to that region. Meanwhile, the small and underfunded Spanish Army has been stretched to its limits by going to patrol Kabul. Last May, 62 soldiers were killed when the plane they were flying in from Afghanistan crashed in Turkey. If we compare the size of the Spanish armed forces with the U.S. Army, this one crash killed the equivalent of 1,300 G.I.s—more than twice the combat deaths America has suffered in Iraq. Not a single voice was raised against Spanish participation in the operation.

However, Spaniards do not understand the larger world. President Bush recently said on Spanish television that outgoing Spanish prime minister José María Aznar "is a man who understands the war on terror, clearly knows the stakes" in that war. True, but Aznar was never able to transmit his understanding to the Spanish public—and in this, he has company in other Western governments.

Aznar was incapable of conveying to his fellow Spaniards that the principles he was applying in Basque country were the same ones he was putting into practice in his approach to Iraq: a policy based on an active defense of national security when threatened by rogue individuals, organizations, or states.

But for Spaniards—as for much of the European public—Iraq was never seen as a problem, and even Islamic terrorism generally was seen as a minor issue. Of course, Mohammed Atta, the probable ringleader of 9/11, planned part of that attack from the Spanish coastal city of Tarragona. And Islamic fundamentalists have been arrested and sentenced in Spain since the mid-1990s, notably by Judge Baltasar Garzón (the same judge who tried to prosecute Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet).

But the Spanish public never thought it would be the target of a massive terrorist attack like 9/11. That was not "our war." Of course, everyone believed the police should act, and they certainly did. Spain also participated in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, but mainly as a way of showing solidarity with the Americans and to make known that Spain is a country ready to take on international responsibilities. It was not understood to be a matter of life or death. Why? Because everybody thought that Spain was too small and irrelevant to attract the terrorists' attention. No matter that it has a border with Morocco, a growing Muslim population, and that the name "Al Andalus"—Arabic for southern Spain—quickens the pulse of al Qaeda fundamentalists, with its evocation of a fallen (and future?) Islamic empire.

Imperial nostalgia is of course something the Spanish people should understand. The Spanish national psyche is deeply marked by the country's long decline, from the 16th century to the 1960s, going from being the world's preeminent power to being a banana republic. In the process, Spain became almost totally isolated from the rest of the West. (*Que inventen ellos*—"Let others invent," Miguel de Unamuno, one of the leading Spanish intellectuals of the 20th century, notoriously remarked.) At the same time, the Army increasingly interfered in politics, culminating with 36 years of military government after the bloody civil war.

This history shaped attitudes that persist to this day. Governments that try to tie Spain to any international military organization or alliance have had to overcome huge resistance. The catchphrase *no tenemos vela en ese entierro* ("we don't have a dog in that fight") is always on our lips. The great powers, we suspect, are just going to use us before ditching us.

Aznar was unable to make a dent in this type of thinking. His main argument for the Iraq war was, "Trust me." But the public didn't. His fellow citizens never believed he was acting in the defense of Spain's security. Instead, they accused him of being an egomaniac, obsessed with his "legacy."

Meantime, the Spanish people stuck to their old beliefs. They thought that globalization was a one-way street, that they could reap its fruits, but none of its perils. Therefore, supporting the United States in the crisis of Iraq was simply playing with fire.

If someone is obsessed with an idea, any event reinforces it. Unfortunately, this was true of the idea that Madrid was an unequal partner with Washington. When President Bush visited Spain in 2001, a few months before 9/11, he referred to

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Aznar as "Anzar," a word that in Spanish sounds exactly like the name of a goose species. Last week, White House spokesman Scott McClellan made the same mistake. In February 2003, Florida governor Jeb Bush was in Spain to meet with the king and publicly gave thanks to "the president of the Republic of Spain for his friendship with the United States." It is said that when King Juan Carlos I met Governor Bush later, he jokingly conveyed "regards for your brother, the King of the United States." However trivial, such anecdotes reinforced the already suspicious attitude of the Spanish public towards Washington, which was viewed as an imperial power using Spain as a client state—one whose political system and prime minister's name were irrelevant. It is easy to dismiss such episodes, but imagine the reaction of Americans if a foreign dignitary raised a toast to "President Shrub, King of America."

The idea that Spain is a bystander in the larger war on terror has, amazingly, not disappeared with the Madrid bombings. Even now there are many people who have not dismissed the idea that this was an ETA bombing, not al Qaeda. This is not only because that organization is a well-known enemy. It is also because, in Spanish eyes, the country is too irrelevant to be attacked. For Spaniards, international terrorism is something for the Big League nations—a problem for the United States and Israel, and maybe for Britain, Germany, or France. Not for Spain.

The delusion feeds on itself. The new prime minister's promise to withdraw from Iraq is popular. People think the Islamists will forgive them and forget them. And that Spain will be able to go back to pursuing its peaceable ways, away from all those "crazy people." After 202 deaths and counting, Spain is painfully slow to understand the stakes. ♦

Schily Season

John Ashcroft's favorite German

BY VICTORINO MATUS

"Terrorism is a propagandistic stereotype and nothing else. . . . 'Terrorists' are what Goebbels called the Russian partisans and the French resistance. . . . 'Terrorists' are what one calls the Iranians who fight against an authoritarian regime in Iran, the Vietnamese who fought against the French and later against American colonial rule. 'Terrorist' is what any American is called who fought against his own government because of this criminal war against Vietnam."

—Otto Schily, April 27, 1977

"I had talks with my friends John Ashcroft and Tom Ridge. . . . [We discussed our] continued successful operations fighting terrorism. We joined in our conviction that with only trust and cooperation with each other can we be successful against the bloody plans of global terrorists. . . . We have to find out who perpetrated these brutal actions, but more important is prevention."

—Otto Schily, February 24, 2004

When Otto Schily made that first statement in Stuttgart, he was a lawyer speaking on behalf of his clients, members of the Red Army Fraction, a left-wing terrorist group responsible for numerous robberies, kidnappings, bombings, and murders. Some 27 years later, Schily, now interior minister of Germany, made the second set of remarks at a press breakfast in Washington.

Following the bombings in Madrid, Schily requested that Germans observe three minutes of silence and had flags lowered to half-mast. He also convened a meeting of E.U. interior and justice ministers to discuss broader security measures throughout the union. "What has happened in Madrid is a shocking event for all the peoples of Europe, and it demands Europe-wide solidarity," Schily told the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Serra* last week. "The [German] chancellor has called a cabinet meeting on security today, because there is important evidence pointing to an Islamic trail. If that proves to be the case, then it would mean that fundamentalist terrorism in Europe has entered a new dimension."

How does a lawyer for terrorists become one of our closest allies in the war on terror? It is a question Schily himself tries to avoid. When his past is raised, the minister simply reminds us, "I was a lawyer," and every German, no matter what the crime, deserves fair legal representation.

"That is only a half-truth," says Stefan Reinecke, author of *Otto Schily: From RAF Lawyer to Interior Minister*. More than just an attraction to left-wing causes, Reinecke believes, drew Schily to involve himself with the Baader-Meinhof gang (which later morphed into the Red Army Fraction). "Schily was attached to Gudrun Ennslin," one of the defendants, who, along with her boyfriend Andreas Baader, was charged with the bombings of two Frankfurt department stores in 1968. "Ennslin shared a similar background with Schily. She played the violin, he played the cello. She came from a well-cultured background as did he. It is not an accident Schily was her lawyer and not the lawyer for Andreas Baader, [who was] a rough guy, not very well educated, with a bad attitude. Even back then, Schily hated people with bad attitudes."

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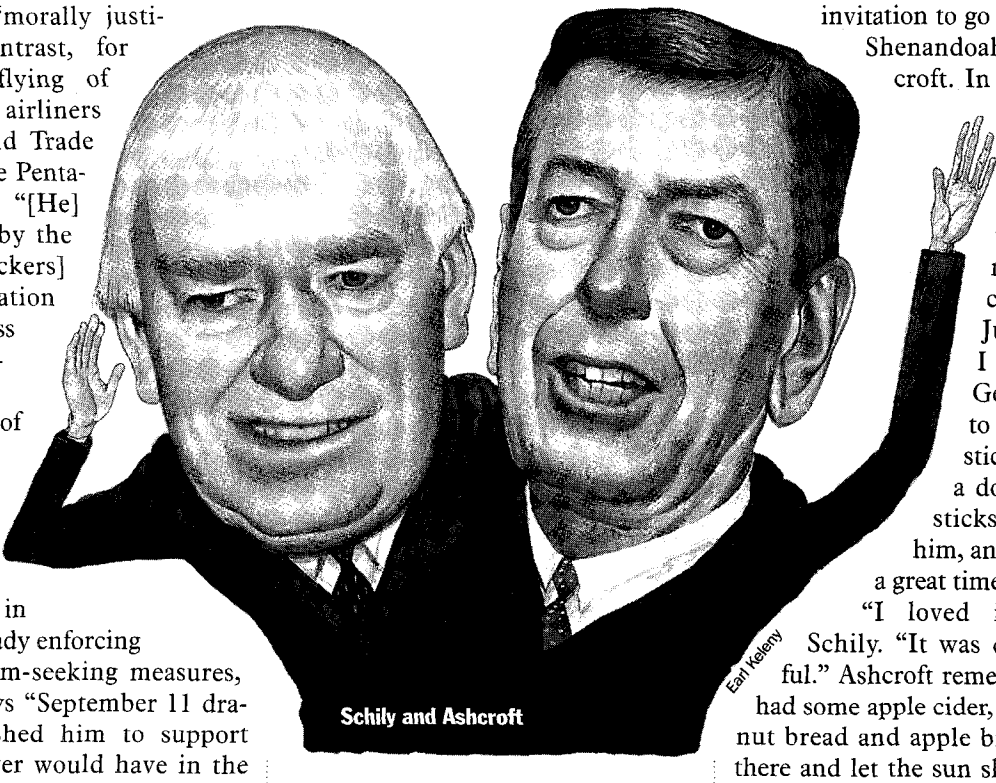
(Speaking of bad attitudes, one of Schily's other Baader-Meinhof clients was Horst Mahler, who later joined the neo-Nazi National Democratic party, which Schily is now trying to outlaw.)

"Schily is a guy with a broken history," says Elmar Thevessen, news director for ZDF German television and a terrorism expert. "Back in the '70s, he was claiming the RAF terrorists were 'political prisoners' of a 'fascist state' that answered to the 'criminal policies of an imperial superpower' with 'political crimes'" which were "morally justified." In contrast, for Schily, the flying of commercial airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was not: "[He] was appalled by the way [the hijackers] found justification for suicide mass murder in religious and historic concepts of Islam." And although Schily, appointed by Gerhard Schröder in 1998, was already enforcing tougher asylum-seeking measures, Thevessen says "September 11 dramatically pushed him to support things he never would have in the past. That mostly has to do with a feeling of responsibility that came with his office." A number of the terrorists, including Mohamed Atta, planned much of the attack in Hamburg, on Schily's watch. As minister of the interior, Schily was asked by Schröder to make sure an event like 9/11 never happens in Germany. It is a task that brought him into a close working relationship with the U.S. Department of Justice, and friendship with Attorney General John Ashcroft.

When I asked Ashcroft how he and Schily could be friends despite their disparate backgrounds, he joked, "You didn't know about my Baader-Meinhof years?" He then explained that "The common ground is the fight against terror. It is what unites us. . . . [Schily] cares deeply about the right of people to be free from this scourge of terror. . . . Otto takes the threat of terrorism seriously, and he addresses the threat with a very complete willingness to devote whatever it takes to win this battle."

In doing whatever it takes, Schily has become a major proponent of biometric identifiers: microchips in passports and visas, fingerprinting, facial recognition technology at airports, and retinal scans—the kinds of things that probably would have appalled the old Schily. And Ashcroft is fully on board: "When it comes to who you're letting in and out of your country, and who you're letting on and off your airplanes, you need to have reliable information and information of integrity, and [biometric identifiers] are a way of doing it. I think [Schily] has been a leader in saying when we do these things, we ought to do them in a rational way."



Schily and Ashcroft

None of this comes as a complete surprise to Reinecke, who considers the minister to be an authoritarian and pragmatic politician—one who had no problem switching from the Greens to the Social Democrats in the 1980s. "For [German foreign minister] Joschka Fischer, the Greens are his family. The Greens are not the family of Otto Schily," who identified with them "not as a left-wing party but as an ecological party."

Perhaps this love for ecology is what led Schily to eagerly accept an invitation to go hiking in the Shenandoah with Ashcroft. In the attorney general's words, Schily jumped at the opportunity "like a chicken on a June bug. . . . I was told that Germans like to have walking sticks, so we had a dozen walking sticks ready for him, and we just had a great time together."

"I loved it," recalled Schily. "It was quite beautiful." Ashcroft remembered, "We had some apple cider, some banana nut bread and apple bread, and sat there and let the sun shine on us as we listened to the river gurgling in the background."

Schily wants to go canoeing on his next trip here this summer. "We Germans are very good at canoeing. I don't know about you Americans," he said. When I relay this to Ashcroft, he replies, "If he wants to ride in the back and make sure the steering is done properly, that's fine with me. . . . I seldom get in a canoe, but when I get out of one it's sometimes at junctures where I hadn't intended to."

On Schily's recent visit to Washington, I asked him whether he has changed—for how else can his

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friendship with the attorney general be explained? "We're good friends," he says. "But it doesn't mean we share all the same positions. But we can discuss this." Schily is reminded of an anecdote from Bertolt Brecht's *Stories of Mr. Keuner*, entitled "Das Wiedersehen." In the story, Schily explains, "a man who had not seen Mr. K for a long time greeted him with the words: 'You haven't changed a bit.' 'Oh!' said Mr. K and turned pale."

The point being Mr. Keuner had in fact changed, and was offended his friend did not take notice. Was Schily trying to say he too has changed and that it is a good thing? Before he could clarify, his cell phone rang, ending our meeting. The call was from John Ashcroft. ♦

The Postwar Corps

Meet the Baghdad volunteers.

BY FRED BARNES

Baghdad

LIBERALS ARE FAMOUS for claiming the moral high ground for their causes and themselves. They like to pat themselves on the back. But at the scene of today's most prominent humanitarian project—Iraq—they are not a major presence. Conservatives are, hundreds of them. Despite the danger, they have volunteered to serve in the effort to make Iraq a free and democratic country. So many have come, in fact, that Coalition Provisional Authority administrator L. Paul Bremer had to cut off the flow. "There are more than I can possibly take," he says.

It's not pay or creature comforts that attract them. They are a kind of conservative Peace Corps. They live in trailers, four to a unit, surrounded by sandbags. They eat institutional food. They work seven days a week, 12 to 14 hours a day. They spend most of their time inside the six-square-mile "green zone," the guarded headquarters of the CPA and Iraqi Governing Council. They face attacks from mortars and rockets and gunmen.

They have sacrificed to come to Iraq. Shane Wolfe, once a White House intern, had just graduated from the University of Akron School of Law and taken the bar exam when he heard CPA spokesman Dan Senor was looking for help. "I believe in this mission," he says. "I believe in it even more now after having seen the reaction of the Iraqi people." Wolfe was scheduled to leave Iraq in early March. "I committed to stay a while longer." Shortly after he arrived in Baghdad in September he learned he'd passed the bar exam.

Wolfe is 30. His press office colleague Rich Galen is, as he puts it, "a 57-year-old Jewish writer." Galen is also a professional Republican, a former press secretary for Newt Gingrich, a TV commentator, and most recently the author of an Internet political newsletter. Galen got a call from the White House last summer and signed up. He says he had "buyer's remorse" from having avoided Vietnam by serving in the National Guard. Now in a war zone, Galen wears a 9mm Beretta pistol. "I'm an extra gun if they need it," he says half-seriously. "There's a low level of fear here, sometimes a high level. But I don't have any doubt this [mission] is going to work."

Then there's Traci Scott and David Luft. She is a 39-year-old African American who gave up her job with Republican congressman Jon Porter of Nevada and came to Iraq after the bombing of the United Nations building here last fall that killed 22 people. David Luft, 59, is an economic consultant from Austin, who worked on the State Department's policy planning staff and for the International Trade Commission in the Reagan administration. Luft arrived a month ago to help Iraqis develop new businesses.

How did the U.N. blast prompt Scott to volunteer? "I felt people were going to start to leave," she says. "If nobody's over here, there won't be anybody to help. I had to come." She was in Baghdad only six days when a military officer she worked with, Lt. Col. Charles Buehring, was killed in a rocket attack on the Al-Rashid Hotel inside the green zone. Back in Washington for a brief vacation, she visited

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his grave at Arlington National Cemetery. It was adjacent to the grave of her father, an Air Force officer.

Having advised former Communist countries on creating a free market economy, Luft felt "the skill I had to offer would be something that would be valuable here. I had good success in the past." Luft grew up in postwar Germany before emigrating to the United States. "American soldiers made friends with me. I can relate to what's going on here. I have great empathy with Iraqis."

Two more: Army captain Patrick Swan, 41, of Alexandria, Virginia, and David McDougal of Boise, Idaho. Swan was working in the Pentagon as a civilian when he was asked to join an Army Reserve unit from Orlando, Florida, that had been called up for Iraq duty. "I said absolutely," Swan says. His mother and daughter urged him to get out of his commitment. He says he told them: "You don't understand. I've got 22 years in the reserves. I'm not a sunshine patriot. When it's time to go, I go. It's inconvenient. But it's not as inconvenient as coming to work at the World Trade Center and finding you had to jump from the 100th floor or have your body incinerated. That's the perspective I bring."

McDougal is an odd case—a British foreign service officer on a leave of absence from his job as a producer of the *Good Morning, Idaho* daily TV show in Boise. He got the job while rafting in Idaho on vacation. "I'm a good Idahoan," he says. He was asked to serve as spokesman for the top British official in Iraq, Sir Jeremy Greenstock. He agreed. Like Shane Wolfe, he's staying on though the term he signed up for has expired. He'll wait for the turnover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government on June 30. His wife is an American.

What do all these people have in common? They're idealistic. They believe the removal of Saddam Hussein's tyranny can lead to a new and better Iraq. They're willing to sacrifice their careers for a spell and leave their families for a cause. What's particularly appealing about them is they don't pat themselves on the back. ♦

Traders Are Not Traitors

Outsourcing is good for America—and the world.

BY CESAR CONDA AND STUART ANDERSON

WHO IS the unilateralist candidate for president this year, the man who's willing to push our allies away and who questions the patriotism of those who disagree with him? That would be John Kerry, at least on the issue of trade. Kerry may like to portray himself as a multilateralist, whom foreign leaders are secretly rooting for. But when it comes to trade policy and the outsourcing debate, he claims that it's America versus the world.

The recent flap over outsourcing—the buzzword for American companies' hiring professional workers abroad—is almost purely political. Reliable data show that America is not "losing" jobs to foreign workers. "Despite the political outcry over the outsourcing of white-collar jobs to such places as India and Ghana, the latest U.S. government data suggest that foreigners outsource far more office work to the U.S. than American companies send abroad," reports the *Wall Street Journal*. Indeed, according to the Commerce Department, the value of "legal work, computer programming, telecommunications, banking, engineering, management consulting and other private services" performed by U.S. workers for foreign clients rose about 7 percent in 2003. In other words, "outsourcing" is a net creator of jobs for Americans, not to mention its benefits for the overall health of the economy.

Despite this, Republicans have been on the defensive ever since the February 9 press briefing of Gregory Mankiw, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. "Outsourcing," Mankiw explained, "is just a new way of doing international trade. We're very used to goods being produced abroad and being shipped here on ships or planes. What we're not used to is services being produced abroad and being sent here over the Internet or telephone wires. But does it matter from an economic standpoint whether values of items produced abroad come on planes and ships or over fiberoptic cables? Well, no; the economics is basically the same. More things are tradable than were tradable in the past, and that's a good thing."

All true. The outrage from Democrats over the remark unfortunately was not matched by a vigorous White House defense. Indeed, a number of Republicans in Congress piled on against Mankiw.

Even by Washington standards, political rhetoric on the outsourcing issue has been abysmal. For example, on the night of the Wisconsin primary, John Kerry tarred all companies that do business outside America's borders as traitors: "We will repeal the tax loopholes and benefits that reward Benedict Arnold CEOs and companies for shipping American jobs overseas." He was a bit more scrupulous the next day, in response to a union member asking if he would pledge to keep jobs in America. Kerry replied with surprising candor: "I don't want to lie to you. If

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a candidate stands here and said 'yes' to you in answer to that, they're not telling you the truth. You know, we don't have the right constitutionally to stop a company from going overseas if it wants to."

Kerry has mostly received a free ride from the media over his demagoguing on outsourcing and flip-flops on past support for free-trade agreements like NAFTA. And no one in the media seems to have recognized the glaring discrepancy between his trade policy—which would alienate almost every foreign government—and his frequent complaints that the Bush administration has "pushed away our allies."

Kerry early on saw political possibilities in exploiting the outsourcing issue. In November 2003, he introduced a bill to regulate U.S. companies' use of call centers abroad by requiring "each employee in the call center to disclose [his or her] physical location." The press release announcing the bill stated that requiring operators to disclose they are foreigners would "go a long way to preserve U.S. jobs."

There is an unusual premise to Kerry's legislation: It assumes that if Americans discovered they were speaking to foreigners they would either hang up the telephone or protest in some other manner. It is not clear how the bill would save jobs, unless you assume Americans have little tolerance for even the most modest level of international engagement. Of course, the entire preoccupation with call-center jobs is a bit strange, since Kerry and other members of Congress had previously passed "Do Not Call" legislation that, according to telemarketing industry estimates, could eliminate as many as two million U.S. call-center jobs.

Some innovative U.S. companies have already come up with solutions to the outsourcing controversy that do not risk a trade war or other foreign policy harm. California-based E-Loan offers its customers a choice of having their loan paperwork processed in India or in the United States. Customers are informed that if they press the "India" button, their loan will be processed in one day, while the U.S.-based work may take two days or longer. More than 80 percent of customers for home equity loans, according to the company, have chosen to have their work done in India—a choice that some elected officials would like to take away from them.

Peter Steiner

The Bush administration's political performance on the outsourcing issue could be stronger. The president recently warned against "economic isolationism," which put Kerry and some Democrats on the defensive for a day or two. However, the administration has itself been inconsistent on the trade issue.

The stakes internationally are high. President Bush declared last year at West Point that a pillar of U.S. foreign policy is to advance liberty on all continents. Free trade in goods and services can be an important tool for accomplishing peacefully what our soldiers are, in part, fighting for in Iraq, namely a transition to a freer and more prosperous world that, in turn, will make Americans more secure.

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman recently described his con-

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versations with some of the young Indians being accused of taking American jobs:

> Kiran Menon, when asked who his role model was, shot back: "Bill Gates—I dream of starting my own company and making it that big." I asked C.M. Meghna what she got most out of the work: "Self-confidence," she said, "a lot of self-confidence, when people come to you with a problem and you can solve it—and having a lot of independence.". . . There is nothing more positive than the self-confidence, dignity and optimism that comes from a society knowing it is producing wealth by tapping its own brains—men's and women's—as opposed to one just tapping its own oil, let alone one that is so lost it can find dignity only through suicide and "martyrdom."

Friedman noted a striking contrast between his conversations with these young outsourced workers and conversations he had had "on the West Bank, talking to three young Palestinian men, also in their twenties, one of whom was studying engineering. Their hero was Yasser Arafat. They talked about having no hope, no jobs, and no dignity, and they each nodded when one of them said they were all 'suicide bombers in waiting.'" Friedman warned: "There is more to outsourcing than just economics. There's also geopolitics. It is inevitable in a networked world that our economy is going to shed certain low-wage, low-prestige jobs. To the extent that they go to places like India or Pakistan—where they are viewed as high-wage, high-prestige jobs—we make not only a more prosperous world, but a safer world for our own 20-year-olds."

Even though the rest of the world views U.S. trade policy as an important element of U.S. foreign policy, commentators here have been slow to see Kerry's trade rhetoric, including implied threats to pull out of existing trade agreements, as problematic. The closest thing to a critique came in a March 15 *Washington Post* editorial: "It is hard to know what Mr. Kerry means by his trade-and-labor rhetoric, just as it is hard to know how to balance his pro-trade votes in the Senate against his campaign denunciation of 'Benedict Arnold' companies. It's good that Mr. Bush is attacking on these issues, and it's time for Mr. Kerry to clarify his thinking."

It's clear that Democrats believe denouncing "outsourcing" is a political winner for them, despite the potential for real harm their proposals would bring. A bill by Senator Tom Daschle, cosponsored by Kerry, would make notifications of "mass layoffs" more stringent in U.S. law than in France and Germany. Daschle's measure, which soon may be offered as a Senate floor amendment, would require U.S. companies to provide 90 days' notice to the federal government when transferring work abroad that affects the jobs of as few as 15 employees. The vague definition of "offshoring" in the bill and the way global companies routinely create and eliminate jobs worldwide could discourage some large companies from adding U.S.-based jobs in the first place.

Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan recently warned a House committee that the "protectionist measures" now being proposed are "alleged cures" that "would make matters worse rather than better. They would do little to create jobs, and if foreigners were to retaliate we would surely lose jobs."

The administration and elected officials who know better need to speak up before this year's campaign degenerates into a bidding war of bad ideas. Otherwise, Americans will face the prospect of fewer jobs, higher prices, and a less free and prosperous world. ♦

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A Lifesaving War

The death toll in Iraq would have been vastly higher over the last year if Saddam had remained in power.

By Gerard Alexander

A year ago, possible civilian casualties loomed large in the debate over whether to invade Iraq. Opponents of the war estimated likely casualties in the hundreds of thousands. One heavily cited United Nations report projected 100,000 to 500,000 Iraqi civilians would die or suffer injury and/or starvation. Of course, those projections were wildly off. Just after Baghdad fell, University of Chicago political scientist Daniel Drezner pointed out that casualties had been "less than one percent of what was projected." But everyone agreed that estimates of civilian casualties deserved to be factored into our decision.

Today's debate would benefit from a second estimate. How many Iraqi civilian lives have been *saved* by the use of force against Saddam? John Burns, who covered the war for the *New York Times*, guessed that in the first six weeks of war fewer Iraqis had died than would have "if Saddam Hussein's killing machine had gone about its daily business." Estimating how many lives have been saved by a tyrant's overthrow is as messy and hypothetical as projecting how many will be lost in a coming war, but the exercise is based on something concrete. Saddam's regime murdered people every year, and would have murdered some number of people had it remained in place over the past 12 months. We can't know exactly how many. But we can make an educated guess based on the regime's record—its long-term rate of killing—combined with its behavior in the period leading up to its overthrow.

Figuring out exactly how many people were killed in Saddam's 24 years as president of Iraq isn't easy. Saddam's murders were frequent and numerous, but the victims and their executioners were often the only witnesses. The true extent of his murderousness will be revealed only when Iraq's many mass graves are exhumed, an enormous and painfully slow task that has just begun. For now, though, we have credible estimates to work with. Almost certainly, most of them understate the regime's bloodletting.

In 1979, when Saddam became president, violence in Iraq escalated dramatically. The regime committed both individual murders and mass murder. The former category eliminated individuals suspected of anti-regime (or just anti-Saddam) sentiments or activities. This included Saddam's personal and factional enemies in the party, disloyal (or insufficiently obsequious) military officers, active or suspected dissidents in Iraq's general population, and many others whose only sin was being a friend or relative of such persons. In 1989, Amnesty International reported hundreds of such executions per year, stretching back over a decade. Some years, these murders reached into the thousands. Of course, any numbers derived from these killings do not include many thousands of cases of torture, rape, amputation, branding, and other atrocities committed by Saddam's regime that stopped short of death.

Its rate of killing was far higher when the regime targeted entire communities. Shia Muslims, ethnic Kurds, and smaller ethnic and religious minorities were constantly subject to violence from the regime (as well as many other forms of repression). In his first dozen years in power, Saddam assaulted at least one of these groups with truly massive violence on average every three years. After Iran's Shia revolution, Saddam became concerned that Iraq's own Shias might try to follow suit. In 1980, Iraq attacked Iran, at which point Saddam wanted also to ensure that Iraqi Shias would not assist their Shia brethren. To these ends, the regime murdered thousands—quite possibly 50,000, according to Human Rights Watch—including Shia clerics.

The Iran-Iraq war put large strains on Iraq's economy, military, and regime. Saddam dealt with the resulting problems in characteristic fashion. Just as with Stalin during World War II, large amounts of blood were shed not only on the military front, but also behind it.

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Shias were not the only targets. In a single episode in the mid-1980s, the regime rounded up and killed around 10,000 Kurds. Even before the war ended, the regime launched a much more ambitious program to wipe out entire Kurdish communities. It was in this military campaign—named Operation Anfal—that the regime used chemical weapons against several Kurdish towns, killing thousands. Human Rights Watch estimated that Anfal killed "more than 100,000" Kurds, and that Kurdish victims of the regime's campaigns between 1983 and 1993 reached "well into six figures."

Kurdish groups estimate Anfal's victims were even higher, up to 180,000. Whatever the exact number, Human Rights Watch concluded that "the Iraqi regime committed the crime of genocide." Anfal's intense phase lasted three months in the spring of 1988. If we estimate its victims at 100,000, the regime was killing Kurds alone at a rate of around 30,000 each month, or a thousand a day.

The collapse of most of Saddam's army in the first Gulf War inspired an uprising or intifada within the military and among the Kurds and Shia. The regime responded with the largest killing spree in its history.

Unfortunately, little information is available about the violence directed against Shias, who are believed to have suffered the worst of this backlash. Initial reports conservatively estimated at least 50,000 Shia victims. More horrifying—but believable—reports have come from Iraqi state security officials who fled Saddam's fickle wrath after 1991. One defecting officer reported that he supervised the killing and burial of approximately 4,000 Shias at one site in one morning alone—this, in an operation that lasted weeks. The U.S. report "Life Under Saddam Hussein" states that "Iraqi officials themselves have privately acknowledged that the regime slaughtered as many as 200,000 Shia" or even more in 1991.

The number of Kurds who died in 1991—killed by Saddam's forces or fleeing them—is estimated at 50,000 to 80,000. This range would have been much higher, except that the Gulf War Allies intervened in Iraq's north in response to the massive flow of desperate Kurdish refugees escaping the regime's onslaught. While it was allowed to proceed, the regime killed Kurds at a rate of tens of thousands a month. The regime also killed an unknown number of people living in Iraq's southern marshes in military campaigns stretching into 1992.

This means that for a time in the early spring of 1991, Saddam's regime was killing Shias and Kurds combined at a rate of tens of thousands *per week*, and would have gone on doing so in the north for much longer had the Americans, British, and French not created a "safe haven" for Kurds inside northern Iraq, which Saddam's forces were basically barred from entering.

In the 1990s, Saddam's regime continued to commit individual political murder. Victims included people suspected of anti-Saddam activity, others who were friends and relatives of the suspected subversives, as well as people caught up in the mafia-like violence of Uday Hussein and other regime figures. Throughout these years, Amnesty International catalogued credible reports of hundreds of killings every year, and quite possibly thousands in several years.

From 1997 to 1999, the regime "cleansed" its prisons, executing up to 2,500 people. Around the same time, the regime began a new campaign against selected Shia. Prominent Shia clerics were assassinated, prompting public demonstrations, which were savagely suppressed with an unknown number of victims. And a new military offensive was launched against groups in the southern marshes in 1998. In the decade leading up to the Coalition invasion, political murder also extended deeper into the regime's ranks than ever before. Thousands in the military died in periodic purges, and killing extended even into Sunni tribes and Saddam's own family.

Four months before Saddam's fall, Human Rights Watch estimated that up to 290,000 people had "disappeared" since the late 1970s and were presumed dead. The Coalition Provisional Authority's human rights office estimates that 300,000 bodies are contained in the numerous mass graves. "And that's the lower end of the estimates," said one CPA spokesperson. In fact, the accumulated credible reports make the likely number at least 400,000 to 450,000. So, by a conservative estimate, the regime was killing civilians at an average rate of at least 16,000 a year between 1979 and March 2003.

Had Saddam remained in power over the past year, individual political murders would have continued, and might well have accelerated given the tensions and fears caused by his regime's high-wire confrontation with the Coalition countries. This would have meant several thousand deaths. What of murders committed en masse? Between 1991 and March 2003, the regime carried out no exterminations on the scale of Anfal. Had the leopard changed its spots? Hardly. The few years leading up to the invasion suggest events might well have been building to another round of mass murder. Some totalitarian regimes kill so many of their opponents and smash civil society so completely that eventually no group has the resources to threaten the regime in any way. This explains why the Soviet Union killed fewer people after Stalin. Saddam's regime

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never achieved this goal. To the very end, Iraq contained large groups that Saddam was prepared to target with massive violence.

How many Iraqis were saved by the use of force against Saddam can be counted in several ways. At a bare minimum, several thousand Iraqis were saved from being killed in individual political murders. This includes political prisoners (including children) who poured from Saddam's dungeons at liberation, Shia activists, other dissenters, and military men suspected of disloyalty. Toppling Saddam also saved several thousand more at dire risk from his gradually rising violence against the Shia. If the Shia or Kurds were targeted with wholesale murder, as seemed increasingly likely, the regime could easily have resumed killing at its historic rate of 15,000 to 20,000 deaths a year. Specifically, the West's already existing threat to use force inside Iraq to protect Kurdistan—a threat whose credibility might well have collapsed if the Coalition had crumbled last year—saved tens of thousands more from certain death every year it was in place.

U.N. economic sanctions were also killing civilians. Critics regularly claimed sanctions caused 4,000 to 5,000 Iraqi children to die per month from poor nutrition and health care. UNICEF attributed some 500,000 unnecessary deaths to the sanctions in the 1990s. The sanctions remained in place as long as Saddam's regime refused to comply with international requirements. Liberation made it possible to lift the sanctions almost immediately—thus saving approximately 60,000 lives a year, if we use UNICEF's numbers.

At some point in the past year, the number of Iraqi civilians who would have been killed by Saddam's continuing rule surpassed the number who died because of the war. We will never know for sure when that moment occurred, whether earlier or later than the six-week mark guessed at by the *New York Times*'s John Burns. But it has long since passed. And that margin will grow with each passing year that Iraqis are free from Saddam. People genuinely motivated by a concern for Iraqi civilians have much to be grateful for. Terrorist bombings inside Iraq since liberation show just how little Baathists value Iraqi civilian lives, and just how ready they would be to resume mass murder if the world let them. ♦

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Latter Day Federalists

Why we need a national definition of marriage

By Maggie Gallagher

I heard it on February 27, 2004, for the very first time: an argument on a major media outlet for polygamy. "It doesn't really matter to me who marries who," said attorney Ron Kuby on ABC 770 talk radio. "You can't deny millions of people rights because you are afraid other people might demand their rights too."

The good news is, the latest polls show 92 percent of Americans oppose polygamy. The bad news is, the pollsters are asking the question.

In San Francisco, Nyack, Portland, Asbury Park, Seattle, and New Paltz, mayors are claiming a unilateral right to redefine marriage. Jason West, the 26-year-old mayor of New Paltz, says he has a "moral obligation" to marry same-sex couples. "We as a society have no right to discriminate in marriage," he declares.

The very ideas that are being used to promote single-sex marriage are a dagger pointed at the heart of the marriage culture. Marriage, these people are saying, is not a public, social norm, it is an individual civil right, a benefit-dispensing mechanism. Every small town or county can decide for itself what marriage means, with no damage to anything important in our common culture.

The fragmenting of America's marriage culture is going on before our eyes, even as the most stubbornly blind advocates of single-sex marriage continue to insist gay marriage poses no threat. As Bob Herbert wrote in the *New York Times*, "Those of you who are already married, tell the truth: [Gay marriage] won't make your marriage any weaker, will it?"

On March 3, 2004, the same day that Yale law school's Lea Brilmayer testified before the U.S. Senate that states would never be required to recognize marriages performed in other jurisdictions, New York attorney general Eliot Spitzer issued a legal opinion exactly to the contrary: that New York law "presumptively requires" recognizing same-sex marriages and civil unions performed elsewhere.

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The California attorney general declined to defend the constitutionality of a state law defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman, merely referring the matter to the court for an opinion. On March 7, the mayor of Seattle announced that his city would begin recognizing same-sex marriages performed elsewhere, even though Washington is one of 38 states with a defense-of-marriage law defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. State defense-of-marriage laws are already being invalidated by public officials confident the courts will approve.

How long is it before some Islamic leader gets the message that America is not serious about enforcing its marriage norms? If marriage is an individual civil right, it cannot be a social norm. A norm guides and shapes individual behavior, to produce a common good. An individual right is a license for each individual to decide for himself what good to seek. How can an individual right to marriage exclude Muslims who want more than one wife? Or bisexual women who would like to share a husband?

What will happen if we fail to affirm a national definition of marriage? Sex, love, and intimacy are private things. Marriage is a public act. A person who marries undergoes a change in status that others must acknowledge. That's why the advocates of single-sex marriage won't settle for civil unions. They hope and intend for their vision of marriage to become the new norm. If the marriages of same-sex couples are to be publicly acknowledged as the full equivalent of marriages uniting husband and wife, everyone's ideas about marriage will have to change.

This is a good thing, say the same-sex-marriage advocates, who take great comfort from the analogy to interracial marriage. In 1967, when the Supreme Court unanimously overturned laws barring miscegenation in *Loving* v. *Virginia*, a majority of Americans supported those laws. A decade later, under the tutelage of the courts, public opinion had changed dramatically. Advocates believe the same thing will happen with same-sex marriage. After a period of initial opposition, a reeducated public will come to embrace this new vision of marriage.

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But laws against interracial marriage had no deep roots in religious thought. More important, they had nothing to do with the public purposes of marriage. They were about racism, not marriage. They were about keeping the races separate so that one race could oppress the other. By contrast, the great, cross-cultural and historic idea of marriage—the bringing together of a man and a woman, in the hope that they might raise the next generation together, and in the secure knowledge that every such couple can give any children they create or adopt a mother and a father—is as old as humanity itself.

This marriage norm is embedded in Jewish and Christian (not to mention Muslim and Hindu) thought. It is also embedded in human biology—not just the facts of reproduction, but the hard-wired realities of gender difference that marriage is designed to help bridge. This ancient and powerful conception of marriage, grounded equally in faith and reason, won't just fade away. If courts are determined to eliminate any difference in the legal treatment of unisex and opposite-sex couples, those same courts will have to take an increasingly activist role in enforcing the new marriage norms they are now unilaterally creating.

The courts may decide, say, that to promote the traditional definition of marriage is to engage in discrimination against people who choose alternative family forms. The courts may decide to punish the teaching of the old norm as a human rights violation. And here the analogy to *Loving* v. *Virginia* holds no comfort.

If favoring the traditional understanding of marriage is analogous to favoring racism, then churches, faith-based organizations, and schools that continue to teach that marriage is exclusively the union of a man and a woman will eventually face penalties in the public square. Yes, the First Amendment will protect their right to sit in a corner and preach what they like. But, as a group of five legal scholars recently noted in an opinion for the Massachusetts Catholic Conference, if the courts actually equate laws defining marriage as the union of husband and wife with laws barring interracial marriage, then single-sex marriage statutes seriously threaten the ability of organizations adhering to traditional marriage to hold broadcasting licenses, have their colleges accredited by public bodies, or secure tax-exempt status for their schools and charities.

The Massachusetts court that decided the *Goodridge* case last November, of course, has already held that the traditional view of marriage is irrational and therefore must be based on animus. But suppose the courts pull back. Suppose they develop a surprising new tolerance for traditional views. The result will still be a quite devastating fragmentation of our marriage culture. In post-*Goodridge* America, people will be viewed and treated as married in some states (or counties, or small suburban hamlets) but not in others. And the gap between religious marriage and civil marriage will widen to a chasm.

Marriage is a pre-liberal institution, a hybrid that fits uncomfortably inside our existing intellectual frameworks. It is older than the U.S. Constitution, older than Locke, older than the Christian church. Government did not create marriage. One cannot call such a social institution into being merely by passing laws. Since government depends on religion as well as culture to help sustain the norms that make marriage an effective social institution, a widening gap between "religious marriage" and "civil marriage" is itself a destructive development.

And yet, in the midst of the utter fragmentation of our marriage culture, a growing number of Republican political leaders appear poised to abandon altogether the idea of a common marriage culture. Rather than defend marriage, they propose a procedural fight. Drawing in part on federalist and libertarian principles, they sally forth crying, "Leave it to the states!"

Thus, Senator Orrin Hatch has proposed a constitutional amendment that is said to be fast gaining ground among GOP senators. It reads: "Civil marriage in each state shall be defined by the legislature or the people thereof. Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to require that marriage or its benefits be extended to any union other than that of a man and a woman."

There are many problems with this language. Courts that have discovered a right to same-sex marriage in general commitments to due process or equal protection are no doubt capable of discovering that "the people" have a right to same-sex marriage. On its face, the Hatch language appears to overturn the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as the union of a man and woman for the purposes of federal law.

Some Republican support for "leaving it to the states" stems from the mistaken view that a procedural issue is a better political issue than marriage itself. But as the nationwide push for gay marriage becomes unavoidably obvious, Americans' support for a federal marriage amendment that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman is growing fast.

In December, CBS News asked Americans the question: "Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow marriage only between a man and a woman?" Respondents favored a federal marriage amendment by 55 percent to 40 percent. By the end of February, support had grown and opposition had

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dropped. Americans favored a federal marriage amendment by 59 percent to 35 percent. Of the *Democrats* polled, 55 percent supported a federal marriage amendment.

Public opposition to same-sex marriage is intensifying. But opinion polls are one thing, votes are another. Is same-sex marriage an issue that can move votes? A special election for state senator in Massachusetts on March 2 holds a clue. Cheryl Jacques was vacating her seat to become president and executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, a lobby for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equal rights. Jacques wanted a trusted lieutenant to take over her seat. Yet even in a safe Democratic district in an overwhelmingly liberal state, the race was close, and voters crossed party lines to elect the Republican.

More fundamentally, "leaving it to the states" will advance the process of educating the American people in the idea that there is nothing special or important about marriage as we have always defined it—about preferring husbands and wives who can become fathers and mothers. It will further the process of persuading Americans that we don't need a shared marriage culture.

Does a national definition of marriage violate the principles of federalism? Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Jonathan Rauch makes the case for leaving the issue to the states: "Remember, all precedent leaves marriage to the states."

This commonly repeated cliché is simply untrue. In a series of decisions in the 1970s and '80s, the Supreme Court made marriage a federal issue, striking down many state laws regulating marriage and divorce. For example, in *Zablocki* v. *Redhail*, the Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for Wisconsin to require a man to be up to date in his child support before permitting him to remarry. A state has no right to require a person to live up to his marital obligations before taking on new ones. In *Turner* v. *Safley*, the Supreme Court ruled that a man who cannot fulfill any of the obligations of marriage (because he is incarcerated) still has the right to marry, state law to the contrary notwithstanding.

Moreover, the question whether the basic legal definition of marriage is a national issue or a states' rights issue was tackled once before and settled, in the 19th century.

Why is monogamy both the legal and social norm in America? For one reason only: Between 1862 and 1887, Congress repeatedly passed laws designed to stamp out polygamy in U.S. territory. The lengths to which Congress went strike us now as extreme. But without decisive federal intervention, America today would have polygamy in some states and not in others.

In 1862, Congress passed the Morrill Act criminalizing bigamy. Under that law, no married person could "marry any other person, whether single or married, in a Territory of the United States," under penalty of a $500 fine or five years in prison. In 1874, responding to the difficulty of getting convictions in regions where people supported polygamy, Congress passed the Poland Act, transferring plural marriage cases from Mormon-controlled probate courts to the federal system. In 1882, Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which vacated the government in the Utah territory, created a five-man commission to oversee elections, and forbade any polygamist, past or present, to vote. By 1887, half the prison population in Utah territory were people charged with polygamy. That year, Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act, which, partly to facilitate polygamy convictions, allowed wives to testify against husbands in court. By 1890, the Church of the Latter Day Saints threw in the towel, advising its members "to refrain from contracting any marriages forbidden by the law of the land."

Like it or not, the only reason monogamous marriage remains the law of the land in America is active federal intervention to protect the national definition of marriage. In the late 19th century, of course, Congress could count on the Supreme Court to uphold its authority. Today, to ensure a national definition of marriage requires a constitutional amendment. But there is nothing radical or unprecedented about the idea of a national definition of marriage.

There is, however, something wrong with leaving marriage to the states. It won't protect defense-of-marriage laws from being overturned by a Supreme Court already signaling its interest in affirming same-sex marriage as a civil right. And in states that adopt same-sex marriage as a civil right, it won't protect Christian and other traditional religious organizations from persecution in the public square if they teach the sanctity of marriage.

Leaving the definition of marriage to the states will amount to a repudiation of Congress's judgment in the 19th century that polygamous marriage is unacceptable in our national, common culture.

Leaving the matter to the states amounts to conceding that marriage is not a key social institution. It suggests that marriage is just one of many values issues about which states can disagree without affecting any truly national interest. Leaving it to the states lends public endorsement to the idea that the fragmentation of our marriage culture is no problem at all.

The reality is that there is going to be a national definition of marriage. The question for Congress is whether it will be the novel definition now being foisted upon us by the courts, or the one affirmed by the vast majority of the American people. ♦

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No Demagogue Left Behind

The dishonest assault on Bush's education reform.

By Katherine Mangu-Ward

Folks over at the National Education Association headquarters are gloating. "Clearly, the ground on [No Child Left Behind] has shifted," said a statement released by the national teachers' union last week. "While publicly castigating NEA for what he called 'obstructionist scare tactics,' U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige is beginning to follow suggestions from the Association."

From the day it became law—January 8, 2002—Bush's education initiative promised trouble. Senator Edward Kennedy and Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, stood by, beaming with semi-forced smiles, while Bush signed the bipartisan bill. "The White House was eager to have George W. Bush and Sandra Feldman embrace," says a Kennedy spokesman, "and they did." But the NEA was already rumbling its disapproval, and a short three weeks later, the odd couple's honeymoon was over.

Which, when you think about it, isn't the least bit surprising. The NEA, along with its political action committee, had donated $2.8 million to Democrats in the last presidential election cycle. The group has never endorsed a Republican for president.

And there's a lot to fight about. More than 1,000 pages long, No Child Left Behind lays out a scheme for educational improvement with a 12-year horizon. As a result, it's impossible to tell yet whether or not it is succeeding. When today's first-graders graduate, we'll know whether it worked. But the law's numerous testing requirements, tight compliance deadlines, and consequences for schools that fail to measure up—extra tutoring, then vouchers, then "reorganization"—are making beneficiaries of the status quo nervous even before many of the requirements kick in.

So the critics are agitating for modifications, and they've had some help from Secretary Paige. On February 23, Paige called the NEA a "terrorist organization," a choice of words he later conceded was "inappropriate" and for which he was "truly sorry." Still, insisted Paige, the "NEA's high-priced Washington lobbyists have made no secret that they will fight against bringing real, rock-solid improvements in the way we educate all our children."

Strong words. But they were immediately undercut when Paige and assistant secretary Raymond Simon began announcing a series of rewrites of the more controversial provisions of the No Child Left Behind law—each of which brought the legislation into line with an NEA demand.

The most recent alteration—the one that occasioned the triumphant press release quoted above—was a revision of the "highly qualified teacher" rule, which requires teachers to have a bachelor's degree or the equivalent in every subject they teach. New teachers at rural schools will be given an extra three years to comply, and current teachers will have until March 2007. Teachers who cover multiple subjects are also given a break. The requirements were hardly excessive to begin with—there were several options for alternative certification for experienced teachers—but they are now more "flexible," says Paige.

Faced with complaints that the "highly qualified teacher" rule was unduly burdensome, Bush's Department of Education was in a classic "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation. Kennedy, for one, has consistently lauded the provision as among the best features of No Child Left Behind. Now he will be able to say that the administration has gone soft on even the law's most basic components.

But the teachers' union hated the provision—it threatened their own—and now that it has been successfully dispatched, they can claim sway over the administration, and boast of a conquest that will stiffen their future demands.

After taking credit for Paige's other recent decisions to relax regulations governing the treatment of special-edu-

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cation students and non-native English speakers in compliance deadlines, the NEA's statement sets to work lobbying for future reforms: "Of course, much more needs to be done," it goes on, and then outlines a four-point plan for future changes, studded with the words "flexibility," "out-dated," and "workable."

Michelangelo is famously reported to have said that a good block of marble has a sculpture inside it, waiting to be revealed. The NEA seems convinced that inside No Child Left Behind lurk the same old federal-aid-to-education programs they're used to, but with more money attached. All that Bush's critics in the education establishment have to do is chip away at the special features of his plan until there's nothing left but the status quo underneath.

In fact, several leading Democrats reportedly voted for No Child Left Behind only after expressing the belief that the accountability provisions would go the way of the dodo, as did similar aspects of comprehensive school reform, national board certification, and other bygone waves of high-minded innovation, while the money would keep flowing.

But just how far below the surface does the status quo lie? Is No Child Left Behind really just a reauthorization of preexisting federal education programs, with tougher rhetoric, a few more tests, and a lot more cash?

Senator John Kerry was among the 47 Democratic senators who voted for No Child Left Behind. But today he regularly elicits raucous applause from sympathetic crowds by bashing it—and Bush. "By signing the No Child Left Behind Act and then breaking his promise by not giving schools the resources to help meet new standards," says Kerry, "George Bush has *undermined public education*." Kerry denounces the law as an "unfunded mandate," echoing the battle cry taken up by his colleague from Massachusetts, Kennedy, just a little over three weeks after both of them voted for the bill.

Since the "unfunded mandate" argument is the most common criticism lobbed at Bush, it deserves a closer look. An unfunded mandate is a requirement from Washington that the states do something—a requirement not accompanied by funding from Washington to pay for it.

Fact: Federal spending on elementary and secondary education in the category known as Title I has increased by 41 percent since 2001, bringing overall federal education spending to more than $35 billion. This is not, by itself, evidence that the Bush reforms are fully funded. It could be that No Child Left Behind costs, say, 43 percent more than existing federal requirements and therefore leaves states to go begging. But the additional nearly $9 billion Bush has poured into the system suggests that he is not starving the public schools in an "unprecedented manner," as has been alleged. When Kerry and Kennedy brandish the word "unfunded," you can be sure that what's happening is a sleight of hand.

It turns out to be the same sleight of hand that has been used for the last 40 years—ever since the invention of the "federal education initiative." Here's how it works: There's a certain amount of education spending already on the books. The president comes along with a series of reforms, some of which will make old programs redundant. When the next budget comes out, it shows funding for those old programs "slashed," as opponents invariably complain. Of course, the reason is that the old program wasn't working. But that's tough to explain when someone is asking why a particular literacy program for rural schools has to go.

Look, for example, at how the NEA explains its highly publicized claim that the Bush administration has "left behind 3.8 million English language learners": "Full funding estimate is based on restoring the peak level of support per limited-English-proficient student as was funded under the antecedent program." Rather than calculating how much the stated goals of No Child Left Behind would cost, and then subtracting from allocated funds to discover if there is a shortfall, the NEA works backwards. Starting with the maximum amount ever allotted to particular English instruction programs, the NEA figures out how many hypothetical immigrants that old hypothetical level of funding would cover, and then publicizes the resulting figure regardless of the situation in actual classrooms.

One person with little patience for the "unfunded mandate" claim is Raymond Simon, the man in charge of implementing No Child Left Behind at the Education Department. In the nearly four decades he has been involved with public education, he told the *Washington Post*, "nobody has ever had enough money. When I was a school superintendent, the principals always wanted more money. When I was director of education for the state of Arkansas, the superintendents always wanted more money."

Bush would do well to take a page out of Simon's book when he faces Kerry in debate. As long as Bush accepts the NEA's premise that insufficient funding causes subpar academic performance, Kerry (and Democrats) will retain the high ground on education, because they will always be willing to say they will spend more.

The allegation that No Child Left Behind is an unfunded mandate is total nonsense, says Chester Finn of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. "Achieving proficiency might be expensive," Finn concedes, "but the

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actual activities mandated in NCLB are fully funded. At this point those activities are almost entirely testing."

Which brings us to the second most common objection to No Child Left Behind. The law requires more tests than any previous effort to improve education. And, more controversially, it applies stricter controls to the way the tests are administered, and how the data obtained are processed.

No Child Left Behind requires annual testing for math and reading in grades 3 through 8, and one more round of testing in grade 10, 11, or 12. In 2007, states will have to add science tests at three grade levels. Thus, the Bush reform requires 17 tests over the course of a public education where previous federal law required only 6. That might seem like a lot of tests, but when No Child Left Behind went into effect, five states already met or exceeded this requirement.

According to the General Accounting Office, states will have to add, on average, eight or nine tests to their existing programs, for an additional cost of about $442 million in 2003, or roughly $9 per student. But this number, write James Peyser and Robert Costrell in *Education NEXT* magazine, includes tests that were required under previous law but never implemented. The Bush reforms alone will account for fewer than half the total new tests. The Department of Education's current appropriation for state assessments is $391 million—*in addition* to funding for half the tests already required but not implemented.

But Kennedy and Kerry don't complain primarily about the costs of testing. Instead, they fret that current education spending is not adequate to cover the costs of instruction. Though the federal government is only a bit player in the financing of education—it has never covered more than 8 percent of the cost of K-12 education, the rest being provided by the states and localities—Kennedy is concerned that if "valuable class time will be taken up teaching to the test," Uncle Sam owes the states more. While it is hard to see how "teaching to the test" detracts from class time if the ability to read and do math is what is being tested, this complaint has long been an NEA staple, and isn't likely to vanish, even under the force of logic.

William J. Mathis, a school superintendent and education finance professor in Vermont, reviewed cost estimates drawn up by 18 states and reported in the *Phi Delta Kappan* that public spending needs to increase between 20 percent and 35 percent to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind, an extra $85 billion to $150 billion a year.

Mathis's numbers have gained currency in the debate. But many education experts question his conclusions, citing the lack of correlation between spending and educational achievement. They point to, among dozens of other examples, the District of Columbia public schools, which spend more than $13,000 per child (the national average is just under $8,000), yet consistently show among the lowest scores in the country. As Rick Hess, education analyst at the American Enterprise Institute, puts it: "If we are spending more than $300,000 to educate a classroom full of kids, and still not getting results, the problem is not that there is too little money. We should certainly be able to educate 30 kids for that amount." And many schools do.

Still, two-thirds of fourth graders cannot read at grade level, and 88 percent of African-American and 85 percent of Hispanic students can't read proficiently, according to figures from the National Assessment of Educational Progress analyzed by Lewis Solomon, an economist at the Milken Family Foundation.

In the end, though, no amount of testing will make a difference if the results of the tests aren't used to hold someone accountable for failure. And the administration, says Finn, has "no stomach" for punishing individuals.

The administration has, however, opened the door to accountability with the "sunshine provisions" of No Child Left Behind. These are the law's biggest innovations: the requirement that testing data be broken down by subgroup within each school's population, and that every group of students demonstrate proficiency.

In the past the smallest data unit was the school. Now, test results are broken down by sex, race, income, limited English proficiency, and special-education status. In order to meet the law's requirements and avoid a "needs improvement" label (No Child Left Behind does not use the label "failing school"), each subgroup must show proficiency in reading and math, or make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward that goal.

In this sense, No Child Left Behind is a blunt instrument: A school where only a single subgroup—say, the non-native speakers of English—is failing to reach proficiency is lumped under the heading "needs improvement" alongside a school where 18 out of 20 subgroups of students are failing.

What's more, a few schools have received "needs improvement" ratings solely because of attendance. A provision requiring that at least 95 percent of every subgroup be present on testing day was included in the law to make sure that schools didn't encourage underperformers to skip the test. Since schools don't even begin to feel consequences until they have failed for at least two years in a row, a fluke year should cause no trouble. Nonetheless, officials at Langley High School in prosperous Fairfax County, Virginia, for example, grumbled when they were told they needed improvement after attendance shortfalls

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Peter Steiner

among the relatively small minority population of the school showed up in their test results.

But these are precisely the provisions that justify the sappy name of the law: No *Child* Left Behind. Not No School Left Behind, or No Teacher Left Behind (though the NEA did issue a release announcing that "15,000 teachers have been left behind"). By looking more closely at subgroups of kids for the first time, the Bush reform gets to the heart of the matter—student performance.

When Bush's No Child Left Behind gathered steam in the fall of 2001, something miraculous happened. For the first time ever, Republicans outpolled the Democrats on education. For one shining moment, Bush was the education president. He was reading to school children, remember, when he heard about the attacks on September 11.

But when "state and local districts started feeling the pinch" of the No Child Left Behind requirements, says Jim Manley, a spokesman for Senator Kennedy, Bush's ratings went down. And since the tutoring, voucher, and "reorganization" components won't take effect until next year at the earliest for most schools, that left plenty of time for stories to appear in the media about schools, like Langley, that had always done well on state assessments but were suddenly failing to meet the new Bush standards. A headline last week read: "Montana's Top Teacher Not Good Enough" after that state's Teacher of the Year failed to meet the "highly qualified" standard in biology, chemistry, and physics—all of which he teaches to middle schoolers.

Secretary Paige has said that he is considering further changes to the requirement that schools have 95 percent attendance on test day, and he has hinted at other modifications to come. Taken individually, these may be sensible tweaks to an enormously complicated law. But taken together, they could signal that Bush has decided to stand down and move into damage-control mode.

Even as the NEA crows over its successes in press releases and letters to the editor, other education advocacy groups, typically those representing racial minorities and kids with disabilities, lament that No Child Left Behind shows signs of going the way of previous education initiatives—lots of money spent for feeble results and less accountability.

Nevertheless, Bush should be on a strong footing when he is questioned about funding and accountability. His administration's huge increases in education spending should dispel Kerry's "unfunded mandate" charge. And, if the president gets the urge to be a real revolutionary, he can have a go at explaining that the problem *isn't* a lack of spending on schools.

As for objections to the new, more stringent testing requirements, all Bush has to do is look Kerry in the eye and ask: "So, just how many Hispanic fourth graders *don't* need to learn to read proficiently?"

It is too soon to know whether No Child Left Behind will eventually cause any more kids to learn how to read. But it does reveal who is learning and who isn't, and it places kids who fall behind on track to receive extra help. These are valuable achievements Bush can claim when he faces Kerry—if he doesn't oblige the NEA with any further retreat. ♦

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Twisted Words and Phrases (1)

How Arab propaganda has managed to give new meaning to old words.

In the decades of the Arabs' unremitting struggle to fight the Jews to the death and to wipe Israel off the map, they have managed to introduce certain words and phrases into the consciousness of the world. These phrases are twisted and have in many cases come to convey the exact opposite of their actual meaning. Today, we examine two of those twisted concepts.

Terrorists and Freedom Fighters

The Palestinians who blow themselves up and in so doing, succeed in killing and maiming as many innocent Jews as possible are described as "martyrs" and "freedom fighters" in the Arab world and even in much of the European press. But, for whatever purpose, the deliberate murder and mutilation of defenseless and innocent civilians can never be warranted by the common law of humanity and by accepted international standards of behavior and international law, even where the use of insurgent force may be understandable and even justified.

And, surely, there must be great doubt whether the insurgence of the Palestinians is justified at all. They have rejected all offers to settle their conflict and alleged grievances against Israel. The goal of the Palestinians is not to live peacefully and successfully alongside Israel, but rather to build a Muslim-Arab state on the charred ruins of a dismembered Israel.

> "There can really be no peace with people who....encourage their children to blow themselves up in order to kill or to maim as many as possible of those who oppose their twisted ideas of religion and of patriotism."

The official website of the PNA (Palestinian National Authority) does not show two states, only one—Israel is eliminated altogether. Palestinian "insurgents," who resort to terrorism and slaughter of innocent Israeli civilians will never acknowledge that a Jewish state, of any size and wherever located, has any right to exist. They will fight to the death and use any method and any weapon available to them to achieve their extremist and unattainable goals.

Those who murder and maim innocent civilians in pursuit of their genocidal ends are not "martyrs" nor "freedom fighters," nor even "militants" (as even the U.S. press often calls them). They are common mass murderers and terrorists, just as much as those who, for their own twisted reasons, committed the September 11 atrocities, and who deserve the condemnation of all decent mankind.

Dishonor in the Muslim World

The subjugation of women in all Islamic countries is placidly accepted by most of the world. The most widespread of these abominations is that of female genital mutilation, a practice that invades the rights of women and their enjoyment of life in the most horrible way.

Another act of disgraceful repression of women in the Muslim world is the "protection of family honor." Under this concept, a woman who, for any reason at all—including having been raped—is suspected of being or having been involved with a man who is not her husband, is condemned to death, usually by stoning. The primary purpose of that savagery is to salvage what is considered the "family honor."

"Honor killings" claim tens of thousands of female lives every year throughout the Muslim countries of the Middle East and Africa. Nobody seems to care. There is no record that the U. N. or any other international body has done anything to interfere with those horrible practices.

Leave it to the talent for genocidal innovation of Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist organization, to have added a new macabre twist to this barbaric custom. In January, a woman named Ream Selah el-Rayashi blew herself up at the Erez checkpoint, the main passage between Gaza and Israel. The woman, mother of two children, had committed the grave offense of falling in love with a man other than her husband. When the affair was discovered, el-Rayashi was given the choice between a dishonorable death by stoning at the hands of her family or an honorable state of martyrdom by becoming a suicide bomber. She chose self-inflicted death and the murder and maiming of many innocent Jews, before dishonor. It is not surprising that no similar demands were made on el-Rayashi's lover.

There can really be no peace with people whose beliefs are so different from Western concepts. There can be no peace with people who treat their women worse than cattle, kill them to save their "honor," and who mutilate them horribly in order to keep them sexually subjugated. And there can be no peace with people who, in the name of and for the purported glory of God, blow themselves up or encourage their children to blow themselves up in order to kill or to maim as many as possible of those whom they consider their mortal enemies and who oppose their twisted ideas of religion and patriotism.

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That Old Time Religion

By MATT LABASH

Samuel "Stovepipe No. 1" Jones

All pictures: Dust-to-Digital

When I was a kid, my parents found Jesus, took to Him like otters to water, and left the more traditional churches of their upbringing to enlist as full-fledged evangelicals. Depending on where my military-officer father's assignments took us, we did turns in all kinds of nearly indistinguishable denominations, from Evangelical Free to Bible churches. But we spent the bulk of our time with the Southern Baptists. SBs, as we called ourselves, were steady and without pretense and highly egalitarian—yet still earthy enough to kick dirt on our charismatic, Pentecostal brothers, what with all their emotive pew-jumping and tongues-speaking. If we'd wanted people carrying on from the pulpit in languages we didn't understand, the SBs reasoned, we'd have become Catholics.

In the one-dimensional world of easy secular stereotypes, many mistakenly think that most Baptists have a bit of the snake-handler in them. But the only time I saw a rattler near church—behind the school building—one of the deacons killed it with a shovel. Being Baptist was actually much less dramatic than getting bitten by poisonous snakes. The articles of faith were easy to keep track of. Baptists generally believed that faith in Christ and His redeeming sacrifice earned you salvation, that you would evidence this faith by climbing into baptismal waters one time in your life to get dunked by a preacher in fishing waders, that you were to religiously attend potlucks to which you'd never bring a store-bought sheet cake, and finally (this one was open to some interpretation), that you would refrain from drinking, dancing, and especially drinking while dancing. If you lapsed, you could still ask forgiveness and were in no danger of getting your name scrubbed from the Book of Life. But you were taking your chances in gossip circles—gossiping being Baptists' official sport outside of church, and often inside of it.

The no-drinking-and-dancing planks never bothered me much. Although I've since made up for lost time with the former, I still cite the no-dancing rule, not for moral reasons, but because it keeps me from getting dragged onto the floor at wedding receptions during "The Electric Slide." What did bother me, however, was when my moderate parents briefly fell under the sway of peer pressure, as my youth minister called it. A fire-breathing band of aspiring church splitters (splitting churches between quarrelling factions also being a favorite Baptist pastime) decided rock'n'roll was Satan's theme music. Unlike other zealots of that time, they didn't conduct any record-burning bonfires in the church parking lot, or listen to Zeppelin albums backwards to hear Robert Plant pledge fealty to the Prince of Darkness. What the records said forward was bad enough for them.

This wasn't good news for me. In addition to suffering through the pop offerings of the day—from rock gods like Toto and Michael "She's a Maniac" Sembello—I also regularly dipped into my dad's old soul records, enjoying an introductory course in everything from the Motown sound to Ray Charles, to funkier stuff like War and the Jimmy Castor Bunch. When my parents decided it would be best to lock this vinyl gold away, I was forced, like thousands of Christian kids before me, to cop my music fix in the artistic wasteland known as "Contemporary Christian

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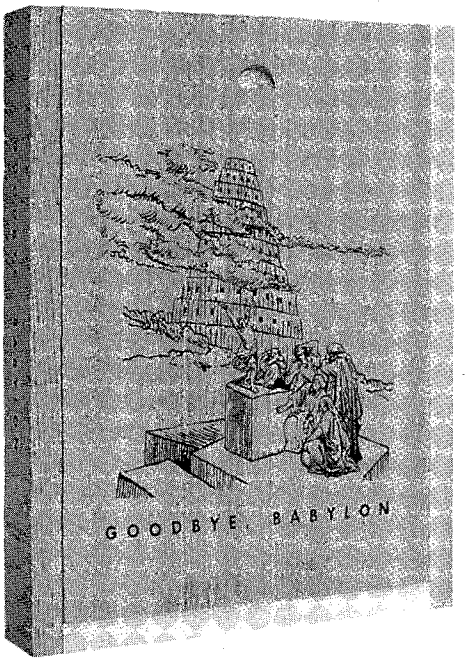

Music." The moratorium lasted about three years, and it was a dark time for all. Since the Contemporary Christian Music world didn't offer enough selection to be truly discriminating, my friends and I tended to gravitate toward those who'd made their bones in the secular world—closer to what we actually wanted to be listening to. It was our sincere hope that though they were singing for Jesus now, our new idols had once snorted their weight in cocaine and known arenas full of groupies. It was bad for the soul, we reasoned, but good for the music.

We liked Kerry Livgren because he'd cofounded the group Kansas, Joe English because he'd been a drummer for Wings, and Leon Patillo because he'd played keyboards for Santana. Never mind that I hated both Kansas and Wings, or that the Santana résumé-sweetener was nothing to brag about. Considering the band had sixteen lineup changes from 1966 to 1984 alone, it's quite possible that I played keyboards for Santana, and just don't remember.

With some exceptions, the music tended to be too on-the-nose: saccharine and over-melodic, all light and no shadows, all gaiety and no grit. And when Christian artists tried to dirty themselves up, it was often painful to watch, such as when the hair-metal band Stryper came around in the mid-1980s (their name, they said, was an acronym for "Salvation Through Redemption Yielding Peace, Encouragement, and Righteousness"). Stryper released albums like *To Hell with the Devil*. They wore matching yellow-and-black spandex suits, making them look like bumblebees with Farrah-hair. They didn't scare anybody. Except maybe when they'd play bars, where they'd try to have it both ways by chucking Bibles at patrons from the stage, making the more pragmatic among us wonder how you're supposed to win people to Christ when you're making them spill their drinks.

I had to get out. So I went to my folks with all the theological profundity a fourteen-year-old could muster, asking them: How could a God who doesn't appreciate the beauty of the "yeah-yeah" echo in Sam Cooke's "Bring It On Home To Me," or the Saturday-morning horns in Curtis Mayfield's "So In Love," be a God worth serving?

My parents, being reasonable people, didn't think God had bad taste. So we resolved to serve Him and still go back on the hard stuff. They took to listening to all the soft-rock hits of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. I became the eclectic paragon of musical refinement that I remain to this day.

But I take the long way around the barn to pose the question that has haunted Christians for centuries. Proto-Jesus rocker Larry Norman actually crystallized it in song once, asking "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?"—a question that purportedly dates back to Martin Luther, who asked it concerning his own hymnody when he was attacked for appropriating tavern songs. The understanding of Christian and heathen alike has been that when God banished Satan, He kept all the key stuff: the clouds, the mansions, the streets paved with gold. But as a sop for assigning Lucifer to an eternity in fiery darkness, he gave him most of the good music. Satan got the Rolling Stones and Robert Johnson. God kept Debby Boone and George Beverly Shea.

But a new six-CD boxed set, *Goodbye, Babylon*, shows God may have been slyer than originally thought—having held in reserve long-forgotten and recently discovered gems that have been dusted off by Lance Ledbetter, a twenty-seven-year-old Atlanta software installer and former deejay. Having become obsessed with sacred music from the early part of the last century, Ledbetter scoured the bins and collections of knowledgeable musicologists over a five-year period, enlisting help from everyone he could lay hands on, including his father, who pulled appropriate Scripture passages as companion notes for songs. He financed this labor of love on his credit cards.

What he came up with is 135 songs and 25 sermons—the largest collection of American sacred music ever assembled. Instead of relinquishing control to some major label, Ledbetter put the whole thing out on his own start-up label, Dust-to-Digital. It's an appropriate name for the time-consuming process of finding and cleaning up scratchy, hissing records. As Charles Wolfe writes in one of the many invaluable liner notes, the records, which predated mixing and multiple microphones, often cut in makeshift studios, were carried everywhere from coal camps to railroad yards to juke joints. But for the love of a few obsessive custodians, the music would've been lost

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forever, as most of the records were "worn out, broken, thrown away, made into ashtrays, used as target practice for local carnival-ball-throwing contests, plowed into landfills, or donated to scrap shellac drives during World War II."

What these salvagers have preserved is a gospel hodgepodge, everything from Sacred Harp singing to hillbilly romps to field-holler prison chants to front-porch blues to jubilee quartets to old-timey country to Sanctified-congregational singing to Pentecostal rave-ups. They all come down in a rain of clamoring tambourines and bottleneck slide guitars, clawhammer banjo-picking, booming jug band-blowing and barrelhouse piano rolls. The songs come from many traditions, though the overwhelming influence comes from both the black and white strains of Holiness music—which resulted from the merger of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church and Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1911. This came five years after the 1906 Azusa Street revival, in which the black Holiness evangelist William Joseph Seymour sparked a movement which church historians say resulted in thousands receiving the "Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Ghost with the apostolic sign of speaking with other tongues."

Pentecostals had spent the first years of the twentieth century breaking away from the Methodists and Baptists from which they sprang, who just weren't cutting it worship-wise. Some Baptists would eventually catch up—Thomas A. Dorsey, an African-American secular musician who became the "Father of Gospel," was a Baptist—as was Mahalia Jackson. But Pentecostals rejected the starchy hymns, nonrhythmic accompaniment, and non-improvisational singing of these established denominations.

Those who became Pentecostals were a largely hardscrabble lot accustomed to having cosmic bricks dropped on their heads. This formed both their musical vernacular (derived from everything from mountain music to old spirituals) and perception of God (many blacks were still around who

A Christian jug band in 1891

had lived through slavery). When it came to worship, Holiness types didn't play around. In both song and sermon, they portrayed a fierce God—One of redemption, but also of vengeance—not the simplistic elbow-patched grandpa, or open-armed hippie-Jesus of the modern superchurch soundtrack. In a 1930 song called "Memphis Flu," Elder David R. Curry, pastor of the Oakley Street Church of God in Christ, and his congregation sing over barrelhouse piano runs, handclaps, and interjections of "Praise Jesus!": *Yes, He killed the rich and poor / And He's going to kill more / If you don't turn away from your shame.*

Referring to the gift of tongues—central to their theology—the Holiness types spoke of being "baptized with fire" (as opposed to their gentler cousins the Baptists, who stuck with water). And while there's no speaking in tongues on *Goodbye, Babylon*, it would be difficult for anyone listening to the holy roar of the Reverend Sister Mary Nelson on the tune "Judgment" to tell the difference: *Well, all you hypocrite members / You wasting your time away / My God's calling for workmens / And you had better obey.*

All of this strange and wondrous music comes in a package that itself lessens the pain of the $100 outlay required to own it. I've had it for a week, and already it is among my most indispensable possessions—right up there with my *Complete Hank Williams* box, my *Stax Singles*, and my *'70s Soul Experience* set, itself ingeniously encased in something resembling an old eight-track tape holder. The packaging is as beautiful as anything I've seen. The six CDs come in a slide-off wood box slightly smaller than the family Bibles salesmen used to peddle door to door. (Ledbetter contracted with a wine-box manufacturer.) The cover is adorned with Gustave Doré's *Confusion of Tongues*, a late-Victorian etching of the Tower of Babel.

Open the box, and you are met with the smell of cedar, as if from an old dresser drawer full of lost treasures. It is packed not only with the disks and a two-hundred-page booklet intended to represent an old hymnal, but also with raw cotton, which Ledbetter, if he's not putting me on, told me was "handpicked from Alabama—my uncle's brother helped us out with it." The cotton is not intended to keep the box's contents from rattling around inside, but rather, as a note says, "This set is dedicated to all the artists who wanted their message to be heard. The cotton is a reminder of the struggle, strife and sorrow that so many of them endured."

These days, the figure of the ethnomusicologist has nearly become one of sport—the earnest white guy in search of The Source of All Things Authentic—looking for some gnarled old black man held together with nothing but suspenders, missing half his teeth and all his wits, preferably sitting on a porch, ready to throw down with a homemade instrument, exhibiting his primitive genius. These sleuths follow in the footsteps of John and Alan

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Mahalia Jackson in 1947

Lomax, who scoured the plantations and prisons of the South for Library of Congress field recordings, or Harry Smith, whose 1952 *Anthology of American Folk Music* is considered the genre's seminal work.

Ledbetter escapes this fate by concentrating on sacred music exclusively—which has been neglected by all but the most rabid collectors. Instead of the blues clichés we've become accustomed to as one collection after another rolls down the remastered assembly line (servicing one's big-legged woman, dusting one's broom, selling one's soul to dicey characters one meets at crossroads in Mississippi), Ledbetter's set has all the rawness and vitality of the blues masters. But lyrically, the artists he collects—many of whom were secular stalwarts who dabbled in or switched full-time to gospel music—are playing for much higher stakes.

There are all sorts of grand themes running through *Goodbye, Babylon*: deliverance and judgment, mortal expiration and eternal salvation. Many secular critics haven't quite gotten past the buckets of blood, alluded to in songs like "Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?" by Da Costa Woltz's Souther Broadcasters, a 1920s string band. Or there's the number by Ernest V. Stoneman—Thomas Edison's favorite hillbilly artist—who, along with his Dixie Mountaineers, sing, *Oh, the blood of Calvary's brow / I can see it flowing now*. But to the church-steeped, whose ears are already acclimated, it's standard Sunday-morning viscera.

The more striking leitmotif is blindness. The collection boasts Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Roger Hays, Blind Benny Paris and his blind wife, Blind Alfred Reed, Blind Joe Taggart, Blind Mamie Forehand, and no less than four Blind Willie's (Davis, Harris, McTell, and Johnson)—the last of whom was blinded when his stepmother threw lye in his eyes during a fight with his father. And that's just the artists with "blind" monikers. There's also blind Roosevelt Graves and Brother (his brother wasn't blind, but had only one eye), and blind Jimmie Strothers (found by John Lomax in a Virginia state prison, where he presumably came to Jesus after murdering his wife with an ax).

So fashionable was it to be a blind gospeler, that it is said Blind Joe Taggart wasn't even blind, he just had cataracts. And then there was blind Arizona Juanita Dranes, an influential gospel singer who once traveled from Chicago to Texas with a note of introduction that read, "Since she is deprived of her natural sight, the Lord has given her a spiritual sight." Even nonbelievers have to give God points for consistency: He sticks with His blind people.

Such physical impairments are a keen reminder that this is hard music made by hard people—singers to whom grace did not come cheap and who are not big proponents of today's prosperity-gospel, Prayer-of-Jabez rhetoric. In a song recorded at the Parchman State Penitentiary in 1940s Mississippi, a prisoner named Jimpson sings "No More My Lord," his rhythm section nothing but the sound of splitters thudding against wood on his work gang (at one point during the recording, a wood chip actually hits the microphone). Then there's Elder Effie Hall and Congregation, who did their version of Thomas A. Dorsey's "Take My Hand, Precious Lord." Dorsey, widely known as the father of gospel music, was a jazz and blues sideman who decided to walk the Gospel highway after composing his most famous song, which he wrote after locking himself into a room for three days after the death of his wife and son during childbirth. They are the songs of people who had accepted their lot and weren't holding out for a much better deal—at least not in this life: *Precious Lord, take my hand / Lead me on, let me stand / I am tired, I am weak, I am old.*

Much contemporary Christian music strives not even to mention the J-word—instead of naming the name of Jesus, they favor double entendres that could serve, depending on the listener, as either sacred music or generic love songs. But the singers on *Goodbye, Babylon* took their Jesus straight, without chasers or apologies. While plenty of the artists on the CDs are famous—Mahalia Jackson, Bill Monroe, Skip James—just as many are one-offers who, in addition to being coal miners or migrant farmers, were sisters and elders, deacons and reverends. Not viewing the church as a springboard to popular success as so many legions of R&B stars have through the years, they sang with conviction and without embarrassment, maintaining that the believer conformed to the belief, not the other way around. They were direct and raucous, and they put the "fun" back in fundamentalism.

They were groups like the Jubilee Gospel Team, who sang, in 1928, that *Jesus will be your lawyer / He'll be your lawyer all the way*. They were singers

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like Mother McCollum, who sang, over her own slide guitar in "Jesus is My Air-o-plane": *Reeling and rocking, you can hide no sin / Jesus coming in His air-o-plane*. They were stiff-necked dogmatists like Sister O.M. Terrell—a street minister from the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God—who, with a wink, put everyone from adulterers to "snuff dippers" on notice, singing: *You know the Bible right / Somebody wrong / God knows / You're wrong*. They are people whose God often seems to have failed them, but who believe anyway—whose songs and wails and murmurs are often defiant affirmations. Death does not make them blanch or prevent them from tending the pressing business of "getting right," which explains sermons like Rev. J.M. Gates's 1926 Christmas pick-me-up, "Death Might Be Your Santa Claus," followed by "Will the Coffin be Your Santa Claus?" and the capper, "Will Hell Be Your Santa Claus?"

The Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet in 1937

As musicians and vocal stylists, they took a backseat to no secular artists of the day—and often, they doubled as the secular artists of the day. Legendary blues guitarist Blind Lemon Jefferson, of Primitive Baptist stock, went so far as to record religious material under the pseudonym "Deacon L.J. Bates" to conceal his secular identity. They were singers like Brother Claude Ely, who in the Kentucky Holiness tradition, sings and plays the perennial Church of God in Christ shout, "There Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down," with a ferocity that suggests he was getting sawed in half while performing.

There are tracks of mysterious beauty, without equivalent in any of today's gospel, R&B, or country idioms. In a 1927 cut, Washington Phillips, in his laid-back Pop-Staples way, sings, matter-of-factly, *Oh lift him up, that's all / Lift Him up in His word / If you tell the name of Jesus everywhere / If you'll keep His name a'ringin' everywhere that you go / He will draw men unto Him*. Phillips, whose demise was long thought to have come in a mental institution, was found only recently by researcher Michael Corcoran to have passed on from head injuries sustained in a tumble down a flight of stairs at a welfare office in Teague, Texas. The otherworldly instrument he played is also the source of scholarly debate. Some think it is a dolceola, a portable baby-grand-piano-like instrument, of which only fifty are thought to exist today. Others who knew him said it was a zither-like instrument of his own creation. In any case, it sounds like a ghostly calliope from some half-remembered dream.

Then there are songs like "O Day" by Bessie Jones and the Sea Island Singers—as satisfying as music gets. Sung typically as a Christmas or New Year's shout after an all-night worship service, this version, recorded by Alan Lomax in St. Simon's Island, Georgia, in 1960, features voices twinning, yet not quite harmonizing. They overlap and swirl and loop around each other over a guitar, syncopated varying-tempo hand-clapping, and a fife that threatens to derail the entire process like a fluttering wheel on a runaway shopping cart, but which instead provides the perfect tension that holds it all together. It is infectious Holiness music, that when I play it—over and over and over again—sees my one- and four-year-old boys bounding through my door, clapping and dancing as if in some tent-meeting trance.

I'd probably join them, if I hadn't been raised Southern Baptist. The lyrics, simple and repetitive, pretty much sum up the whole ball of wax, redemption-wise: *Yonder come day, I heard him say / Yonder come day, it's a dying day / Yonder come day, it's a burying day / Yonder come day, I was on my knees / Yonder come day, when I heard him say / Yonder come day, that's a New Year's day / Day done broke into my soul / Yonder come day, well, come on, child / Yonder come day, Jordan roll*.

In a recent piece for the *Washington Post*, Eddie Dean, one of the great chroniclers of lost America—which isn't a crowded field—interviewed Dick Spottswood, who, at Ledbetter's behest, served as both music and liner-notes wrangler on much of *Goodbye, Babylon*. Spottswood, himself a Washington, D.C., institution as host of the

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local public-radio station's invaluable Obsolete Music Hour, is no holy-rolling Bible thumper. But he perfectly nailed the difference between the old and new sacred music: "It's not like contemporary Christian songs, which are all praising Jesus, with nothing about sin or guilt. They've turned Jesus into a very cheap, off-the-shelf, one-size-fits-all Jesus. There's nothing of substance left, and the music reflects this sort of mindless cheerfulness. With the old-time gospel songs, like [the Monroe Brothers'] 'Sinner You Better Get Ready,' there are dark clouds and tragedy and death and all the unpleasantries you have to go through before you can stand in line at the redemption counter."

As a kid, I would get chills when we used to sing the old 1899 Lewis E. Jones hymn, "There is Power in the Blood." The women, trying to out-falsetto each other, would sing "There is power, power, wonder working power in the blood of the Lamb." The men would double-time, walking a steady bass-line underneath, with "There is power, power, power, power, wonder-working power." And there is, in fact, power, listening to Jesus bleed into the Devil's music.

It's a sensation I get over and over again, watching secular artists reach up to address the sacred. The great ones often seem to get greater (as when the Rolling Stones sing "I Just Want to See His Face" and "Shine a Light"). The not-so-great often achieve greatness doing the same (the closing flourishes of Lionel Richie and the Commodores' much-overlooked 1981 "Jesus is Love" are some of the most pristine acts ever committed in a studio).

I was reminded of this during a recent re-viewing of *The Last Waltz*, the universally acclaimed 1978 film, in which The Band took a final bow by inviting tons of more famous stars like Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan to turn them into a backing band at their own farewell concert. In between all the high-wattage stage performances, which made the soundtrack, came a quiet moment. It is one of my favorite moments in The Band's history, and by extension, one of my favorite moments in music. At some flophouse, The Band, looking desiccated and debauched from Lord-knows-how-many-years on the road, were enjoying one of their last moments of total camaraderie. Keyboardist Richard Manuel sat in a chair, while Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko sat on an adjoining couch.

They seemed blissfully unaware that their best years were soon to be behind them. (Manuel, less than a decade later, would hang himself in a motel room.) And Danko, who played the loose bass lines and sang the yearning, desperate harmonies that crystallized their sound, looked beautifully doomed as always. (He would later lose a son and die prematurely himself.) Monkeying around for director Martin Scorsese, Manuel suggests the boys strike up "'Old Time Religion' for the folks." Robertson and Danko oblige. Robertson strums his guitar, while Danko, not even bothering to lift his fiddle to his shoulder, saws off the opening notes. Robertson sings it straight—*give me that old time religion . . . it's good enough for my grandpa . . . it's good enough for me*—while Danko, still fiddling, lays down some percussion, kicking tables and stomping floors as he echoes Robertson, while improvising "good enough" interjections around the song's nub. The whole moment is ragged and off-the-cuff and only lasts about forty-five seconds. But somehow, it is perfect. At its conclusion, with the spell broken, Robertson takes a drag off his cigarette—and admits, "It's not like it used to be."

Indeed, it isn't. Which is why we should study and cherish collections like *Goodbye, Babylon*. There is something ennobling about watching fallible man—tired and weak and old, in Thomas Dorsey's words—stumbling around to find God in the dark. Vicariously, we take their ride, as men and women who knew difficulty hope that the best parts of themselves cross the goal line—that they, in the words of cataract-addled Blind Joe Taggart, get to the "great camp meeting on the other side of the shore." Meanwhile, we are left with the documentation of their struggle, the bottleneck slides and jug blows and handclaps of those who left the next best part of themselves behind on scratchy vinyl, pointing the way for the rest of us, still stumbling around in the dark. ♦

Staging Iraq

Tim Robbins's theater of the absurd.

BY DAVID SKINNER

I expected the new antiwar drama *Embedded* to be artless, thudding propaganda, filled with commonplace observations passed off as a major exposé. What I didn't expect was a play that might have been written for a convention of conspiracy-mongers. Theater of some kind is what I anticipated when I arrived in Greenwich Village to see it last weekend. The chatter of a Lyndon LaRouche meet-up is what I found.

Embedded, written and directed by Tim Robbins, follows three groups of Americans—soldiers, journalists, and administration officials—from October 2002 to June 2003: the five months that led up to the war and then three months of fighting and occupation. President Bush is represented by his underlings, while the Baathist regime

David Skinner is an assistant managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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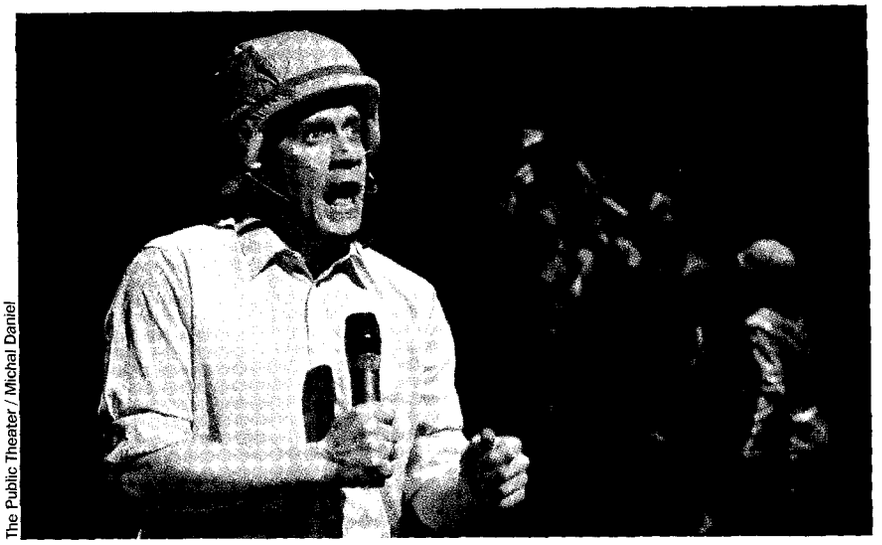

The Public Theater / Michal Daniel

Andrew Wheeler as Stringer in a scene from the Actors' Gang production of Embedded.

in Iraq might as well not exist: A Saddam Hussein character is mentioned, but his name is "the New Hitler," a heavy touch meant to criticize America's hawks for exaggerating the Iraqi dictator's genocides. War's violence is limited to two scenes, in one of which an American soldier kills an Iraqi family after they fail to stop their car at a checkpoint.

Meanwhile, Robbins studs the play with yuk-yuk references to the political philosopher Leo Strauss—to say nothing of obscure and questionable accusations served up as obvious and true, or journalistic wrinkles from well over a year ago delivered like this morning's news. To keep 'em laughing, Robbins throws in several over-the-top crudities about presidential advisers (two "Dick" Cheney jokes, for example).

Robbins was among the most outspoken of entertainment figures to criticize the war in Iraq. Under his own byline in the *Nation* magazine, on the podium at protest rallies, before a select audience of Washington media, the Oscar-winning actor made a pulpit of his celebrity to let the world know that people who thought the way he does are unable to voice their dissent in America's hostile political climate. A production at one of New York City's most respected theaters is just the latest manifestation of the ruthless manner in which he's been so efficiently muzzled.

The driving idea of *Embedded* is that the United States manipulated the Iraq war for the sake of public relations and thus silenced antiwar critics. Surely, there is some truth to the charge that the United States pursued a self-interested strategy in its dealings with the press.

But Robbins's assault can't be taken seriously so long as he ignores every element of the war that gives any context to the invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam. Worse than politically silly, the play is dramatically unsatisfying. Except for when the journalist characters recite genuine reportage from the front, the life-ending and life-changing drama of battle is absent from *Embedded*, reduced to a couple of stand-alone speeches designed merely to score political points.

Much attention has been given to Robbins's portrait of administration officials as war-crazed Straussians, but no less ridiculous is Robbins's caricature of American military personnel. At the opening of the play, tender little soldiers troop off to war like kids being sent to summer camp. One of these woe-is-me innocents, a fictionalized Jessica Lynch, is told by her simpleton father: "If I had made any money, you wouldn't be going off to war." The story of Jessica Lynch plays like an old-fashioned damsel-in-distress flick, but in this one, all the moustache-twisting villains are in Washington.

Just to make sure nobody misses the point, the Straussians wear funhouse masks with bubble cheeks and laughing eyes, and they speak pidgin Plato and a haphazard lingo of military terms ("weapons of annihilation" instead of "weapons of mass destruction," in another swipe at the exaggerations of hawks). This group consists of several top military advisers, all working out of the Office of Special Plans, which has become, for conspiracy believers, the central processing center for all the lies Bush used to rush an unprovoked United States into attacking minding-its-own-business Iraq. But again, such politics create a problem for theater: Who but the most devoted *Nation* reader gets jokes about the Office of Special Plans?

The characters at the Office of Special Plans represent the president's key military advisers, with their surnames infantilized into "Rum-Rum," "Woof," and so on. Stacked together like a chorus, they face the audience and say things like "Plato kicks Socrates' ass" and "As Leo Strauss would say . . ." If I had a nickel for every time someone actually said that in Washington, I wouldn't be able to make a local phone call. Still, Robbins gives it a try, with the Richard Perle character quoting, "'Moral virtue has no application to the really intelligent man, the philosopher.'"

In the *Wall Street Journal*, Terry Teachout hunted down the source of this misquotation in a paraphrasing of a paraphrasing of what Strauss critics imagine he thought. Yet it gives a fair reading of who Robbins imagines Strauss to be. In Robbins's view, Leo Strauss and the neoconservatives believe in the noble lie, the desirability of philosopher-kings, and many other shockingly antidemocratic ideas. As source material, Robbins appears to have relied on the work of anti-Strauss scholar Shadia Drury and one or two LaRouchies for whom the work of Strauss has all the offensiveness of Plato's *Republic* without any of the subtlety or comic irony.

Still, the production of *Embedded* is peppy, and the actors occasionally bring this leaden material to life, despite many humorless moments (like the use of Edwin Starr's old 1970s standard "War, *unh*, what is it good for?" as incidental music). Also, to its credit, the play is short, running a lean ninety minutes without intermission. ♦

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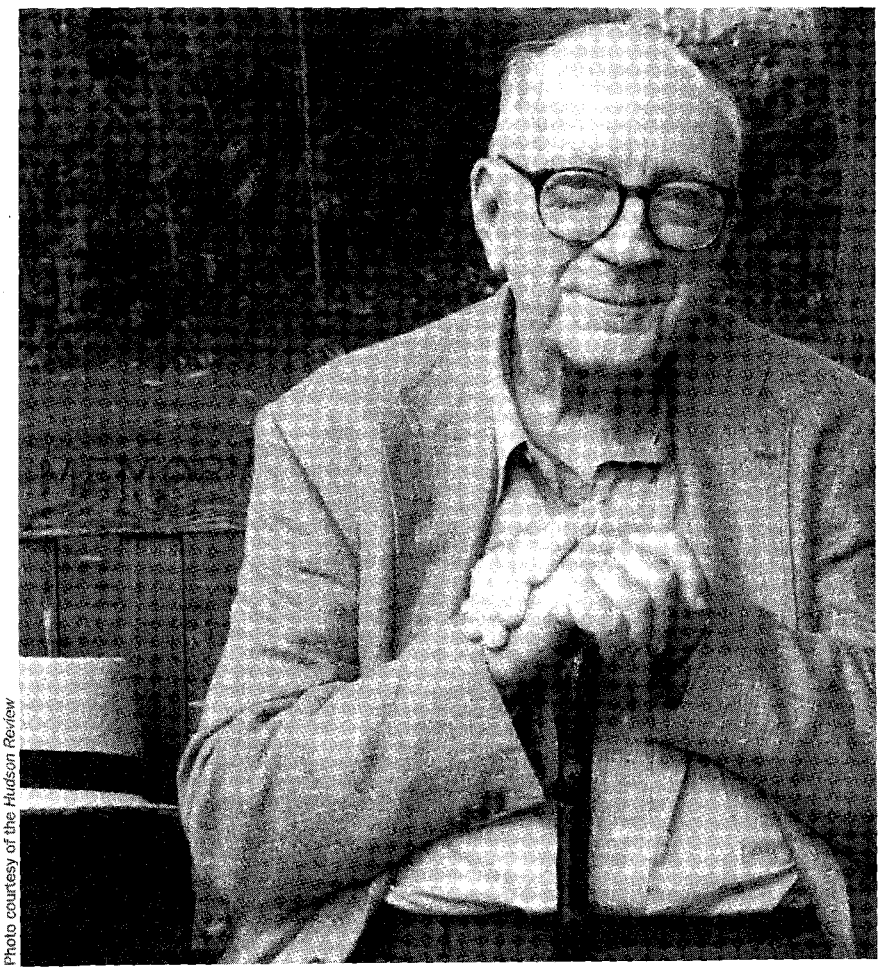

Photo courtesy of the *Hudson Review*

Frederick Morgan (1922-2004)

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Frederick Morgan, for fifty years the editor of the *Hudson Review* and an accomplished poet who died on February 20 in Manhattan at the age of eighty-one, was a serious and substantial and immensely attractive man. He also had a smile in his voice, an upper-class version of a New York accent—"Jee-o, hi," he would greet me over the phone, "it's Fred Morgan"—and a wonderful laugh it always pleased me to be able to evoke.

I first met Fred Morgan in 1970, and I began writing for him not long afterward. The *Hudson Review* paid much lower rates than other magazines; it even had a policy, before the onset of computer printing, of charging contributors for changes on galley proofs, which meant that, theoretically, one could actually lose money writing for it. Yet it always delighted me to find my prose in its pages. Sydney Smith, listing his motives for writing to Lord Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, included, along with the jollity of punishing folly and making money, "the love of you." I myself felt something of this last-named motive in writing for Fred.

Fred was rich, though he displayed few obvious outward signs—no ritz, no glitz—of his family's wealth. I once met his mother, a gracious woman then in her eighties, who resembled nothing so much as one of those upper-class women in the Helen Hokinson cartoons. As a young man, Fred had the luxury of deciding to become richer through dull work or to devote himself to his love, which was literature. He sensibly chose the latter, and he never, in my presence, expressed the least doubt about the rightness of the decision.

The first time I met Fred was in his magazine's old office on 55th Street. He had just brought in a milkshake and a turkey sandwich, which he ate, as we talked, with what seemed to me serious pleasure. On our second meeting he took me to lunch at Giovanni's, a restaurant his father used to patronize, where everything tasted wonderful and a quiet but pleasing fuss was made over Fred and his wife, Paula Deitz.

Fred Morgan had the ability to concentrate on the moment and enjoy it to the maximum, but, like so many people with genuine *joie de vivre*, behind it lay deep sadness. Fred buried three of his children. He was too manly to talk about, or even hint at, the effect of these horrific events in his life. Paula, whom he married in 1969 and who currently edits the *Hudson Review*, was a great find for him, and his adoration of her never seemed, when I was with them, less than complete.

I spent an afternoon in Fred's company once at his summer home on the ocean at Blue Hill, Maine, driving there in a rented white Lincoln Towncar. I recall saying to Fred that "White Lincoln at Blue Hill" sounded like a Wallace Stevens poem, and then remembered that he was old enough to know Stevens, whom he had convinced to contribute to his magazine. He had also gone to St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., to see Ezra Pound, from whom he acquired a

Joseph Epstein is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The Step

From where you are at any moment you
may step off into death.
Is it not a clinching thought?
I do not mean a stoical bravado
of making the great decision blade in hand
but the awareness, all so simple, that
right in the middle of the day
you may be called to an adjoining room.

—*Frederick Morgan*

contribution for the magazine. He once told me of a visit to his apartment from T.S. Eliot, who sat on the sofa, seeming shy and holding hands the entire time with his second wife Valerie.

Fred Morgan was a man of the age of the quarterlies. When he and two Princeton classmates—Joseph Bennett and William Arrowsmith—began the *Hudson Review* in 1948, the quarterly literary magazine was a thriving and, in its own quiet way, powerful literary institution. Editors of the quarterlies—John Crowe Ransom at *Kenyon Review*, Allen Tate and Monroe K. Spears at *Sewanee Review*, Philip Rahv and William Phillips at *Partisan Review*, Karl Shapiro at *Prairie Schooner*—were great figures. Fred Morgan, though younger than all these men, was their peer.

In some ways he was superior to them in editing a magazine that was astonishingly free from literary and intellectual and political fashion. Although I knew Fred for more than thirty years, he died without my knowing his politics. Many professors wrote for the *Hudson Review*, but, through the skill of Fred's editing, it always seemed more a metropolitan than academic magazine. I knew many of the things he loved in the realm of art, but even more, I knew that he had very little tolerance for nonsense and cant. Because he wasn't afraid to act on this low tolerance through his magazine, he was never a prize-winning poet, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, or an establishment figure. One of the specialties of the *Hudson Review* in the 1960s and 1970s was the deflation of the second- and third-rate in literature, film, and theater. Marvin Mudrick (on literature), Vernon Young (on chiefly European film), and John Simon (on theater) wrote in nearly every issue, three tough guys guarding the gates against the tawdry and pretentious.

Although quarterly magazines retain their usefulness as places to publish a thoughtful essay, a well-made longer poem, or a short story that is not freakish but quietly situated in everyday life, quarterlies themselves no longer seem central to the hum and rhythm of contemporary intellectual life. In the age of email, fax, FedEx, and omnipresent cell phones, it sometimes seems as if the only fit periodical would be an hourly.

I never spoke with Fred, a quarterly man to the bone, about this, but my guess is that he would have made a persuasive case for the literary and intellectual quarterly—as a place to be more reflective and to impose the old standards, a tent from which to watch the ever-more speedily passing caravans and hear the ever-more loudly barking dogs, and, with ample space and leisurely deadlines provided, make a scrupulous attempt to understand what is really going on in the world of intellect and culture. That, after all, is what Fred Morgan did for all his adult life, and did it, over a longer haul, better than anyone else. ♦

Blue Hill Poems: X

Oh, unapproachable One,
whom yet through this night of soft rain
I feel coolly stir at my heart,
through all my deaths and lives
may I flow in your presence, and sing—
as I follow the shapes of my selves—
your glory, your peace, your abundance.

—*Frederick Morgan*

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Parody

"Late one Friday afternoon in January, after the House of Representatives had adjourned for the week, Cybele Bjorklund, a House Democratic health-policy aide, heard the buzz of the fax machine at her desk. Coming over the transom, with no hint of the sender, was a document she had been seeking for months: an estimate by Medicare's chief actuary showing the cost of prescription drug benefits for the elderly."

***—New York Times*, March 18, 2004**

NO. 8058 P. 1/1

JAN. 9. 2004 4:49PM

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FAX [redacted]

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TO: Cybele Bjorklund, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee

FROM: [redacted]

RE: Cost of president's proposed Medicare prescription drug plan

PAGES: 1 of 1

That memo you shared with the New York Times last week only scratched the surface. Not only was the 10-year, $400 billion CBO estimate short of the mark, but even the higher estimates fail to account for the impact on costs should Democrats recapture the White House. The health effects on the population would require that we revise several figures upward. Here is a projection, by medication, of the true cost of the Medicare prescription drug plan under the John Forbes Kerry administration.

Congressional Budget Office initial estimate:	$400,000,000,000
Prozac and other anti-depressants: The prospect of four years of listening to John Kerry will drive sales of these drugs well beyond currently projected levels.	+ 83,000,000,000
Propecia and other hair-growth stimulants: Scalp-envy will strike American men with a vengeance as they gaze upon President Kerry's ample cranial pelt.	+ 97,000,000,000
Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, and other male-enhancement medications: This drug category surged during the Clinton administration. Baby Boomers now have great expectations about their senior years, so sales of these treatments have nowhere to go but up. A new Democratic administration always means more exploration on the frontiers of intimacy, as it were.	+ 123,000,000,000
Botox: In addition to thicker, more manly hair, American men and women alike will yearn to emulate the smoothness of the presidential brow. Of course, Kerry's wrinkle-free appearance is unquestionably natural, but many who aren't so blessed will resort to Botox injections.	+ $59,000,000,000
Total revised estimated cost of Medicare prescription drug plan:	**$762,000,000,000**

Note: If President Kerry gets reelected in 2008, these figures will require further upward revision to allow for the huge market potential for prescription home-euthanasia kits.

the weekly Standard

March 29, 2004

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Some Sobering Thoughts [illegible] Future—*and Ours*

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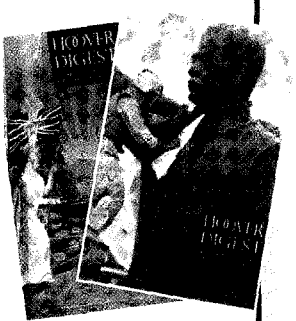
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY



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The revelation that Pa[illegible] have transmitted knowledge [illegible] atomic weapons to Iran and Libya re[illegible]es our attention on this troubled ally. President Pervez Musharraf, a survivor of many assassination attempts, is despised by those who desire to impose a Taliban-type regime on the nation. If a military junta armed with nuclear weapons and sympathetic to radical Islamists took over, the outcome could be disastrous.

President Musharraf's most implacable enemies are fundamentalist Islamic groups whose members are found in parliament, the army, the intelligence services (SIS), the intelligentsia, and government. Indeed, the Pakistani army and SIS were instrumental in the Taliban's coming to power in Afghanistan.

The hostility toward President Musharraf stems from his cooperation with the United States and his policies toward India and the Kashmir region. His enemies hope to undermine him by fanning the flames of dissatisfaction. **We can help Pakistan achieve stability by discouraging policies that create unrest and encouraging policies that will benefit the struggling population.**

Some policies should be immediately dropped, including the president's well-intentioned land reform program. Although half of Pakistan's population is engaged in rudimentary agriculture, in country after country, government redistribution of private property has failed.

The government ought to also abandon attempts to impose Urdu as the official language. Only 8 percent of Pakistanis were Urdu speakers in 2003, with surveys indicating that more than half the population prefers to have their children taught in English because it is the lingua franca of the government and the elite. Pakistan should take a lesson from India, which has shown that allowing [illegible] groups greater autonomy creates a stake for these provinces to stay within the union.

The government also needs to raise the level of literacy. Less than half the population is currently literate, in part due to policies that favor higher education at the expense of wider availability of elementary education. A better-educated public would make Pakistan much more attractive for direct foreign investment—thus bettering the lives of ordinary citizens.

The United States must encourage Pakistan to divert a greater portion of its GNP toward elementary and secondary education for women. Among many benefits, educated women tend to have fewer children and those children are healthier and attain higher levels of education than do children of uneducated women.

Poor economic prospects have forced university and high school graduates to migrate to the gulf countries, Western Europe, and the United States. That trend must be slowed and eventually reversed. Economic prospects at home would improve if Pakistan liberalized its economy. The United States can help by extending its program that provides credit and business development services to micro-entrepreneurs to Pakistan.

Lastly, Pakistan and other countries, including the United States, must convince Saudi Arabia to support secular schools instead of funding radical Islamic schools—these madrassas have been hotbeds for terrorism.

Reform and stability will not come easily. But **we must help President Musharraf create a more open economy, a freer political system, a broader educational system, and greater respect for provincial authority.** If he does not succeed, we will likely face very unpleasant consequences.

—Guity Nashat

Guity Nashat is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an associate professor of history at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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